



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

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Anti-Death Penalty Coalition Denounces New Legislation

The Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) this week expressed disappointment at the introduction of SB115, Sen. Alan Lasee's bill to reinstate the death penalty in Wisconsin.

"The death penalty is expensive, ineffective as a crime deterrent, raises serious moral questions, and has resulted in the executions of innocent people," said Sachin Chheda, Executive Director of WCADP. "Wisconsin has gone over 150 years without executing a prisoner, and there is no logical reason why we should start now."

Across the country, over 120 people have been exonerated and freed from death row since 1973 due to evidence that has confirmed their innocence. In addition, various reports have identified specific individuals who have been executed, but are now widely believed to have been innocent.

"No Wisconsin citizen wants an innocent person executed in their name," said Chheda. "This bill offers no real guarantee that the innocent will be protected."

In addition, costs associated with the death penalty are much higher than those associated with life imprisonment.

"States like New York and New Jersey have spent tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to implement death penalty systems that have not made their states safer, and that have not resulted in any actual executions," said Chheda. "Senator Alan Lasee's single-minded obsession would result in a massive tax increase for all Wisconsin citizens. We could instead use our hard-earned tax dollars in ways that will actually reduce crime and make communities safer, by supporting improved police, victim and prosecutorial services.

"The death penalty is wrong for Wisconsin, and the citizens of Wisconsin know it," said Chheda. "Despite the misleading referendum passed by a narrower-than-expected margin last fall, it is clear that Wisconsin citizens prefer that the strongest punishment in Wisconsin be life without parole.

"We will continue to work in every region of the state to educate the public about the dangers of the death penalty," said Chheda. "Our coalition is growing every day, and we believe that the introduction of this bill will only strengthen the state and national movements to end the death penalty."

The Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a coalition of organizations and individual leaders dedicated to educating the people of Wisconsin about the fiscal and moral cost of re-establishing the death penalty. Participants include law enforcement officials, family members of murder victims, public interest organizations, faith groups, and many others.