

A Resolution for Repeal of the Death Penalty in Wyoming

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of the United States approved a resolution in 2006 to call for repeal of the death penalty nationwide, and several state Leagues have approved similar positions since then; and

WHEREAS, claims that the death penalty has a deterrent effect on murder rates are “fundamentally flawed” and should not be used when making policy decisions (2012, National Research Council), and the 2017 FBI Uniform Crime Report shows the South, which accounts for more than 80 percent of executions, has the nation’s highest murder rates; and

WHEREAS, capital punishment cases in Wyoming cost prosecutors and public defenders about \$750,000 a year to prepare for trial, regardless of subsequent plea bargains or trial outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the American judicial system is fallible, and 164 persons have been exonerated from death row since 1973, and that innocent persons have been executed, modern DNA technology will do nothing to obviate wrongful convictions that result from jailhouse informants, inadequate defense, misused forensic evidence, government misconduct, false confession and eyewitness misidentification; and

WHEREAS, Wyoming State Public Defender Diane Lazano and Wyoming Department of Corrections director Bob Lampert have testified in legislative committees as to the toll taken on juries, families and corrections employees in capital trials, death row incarceration and ultimate executions; and

WHEREAS, life imprisonment without parole achieves the objectives of punishment and public protections in the most severe criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, the Wyoming Department of Corrections has increasing difficulty in finding and maintaining a supply of approved drugs used in execution by lethal injection, according to Director Bob Lampert; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wyoming has no pending capital cases and no one on death row, and there has been one execution, in 1992, since reinstatement of the death penalty in Wyoming.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the League of Women Voters of Wyoming urges the Wyoming Legislature to approve legislation in the next session to repeal the death penalty in Wyoming and to convert any pending death sentences to life imprisonment without parole.

Adopted by the League of Women Voters of Wyoming at the 2019 Annual Convention