

R019-0607

10 **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE REPEAL OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN**
20 **THE STATE OF MARYLAND**

30 **WHEREAS:** The State of Maryland currently allows the death penalty; and,

40 **WHEREAS:** The death penalty is inappropriate as long as the justice system is
50 fallible, as it is a punishment that can never be reversed; and,

60 **WHEREAS:** In 1993, Kirk Bloodsworth was released from jail after being
70 exonerated by DNA evidence, eight years after being convicted of
80 murder and sentenced to death by a Baltimore County judge; and,

90 **WHEREAS:** Throughout the country, over 100 people on death row have been
100 released after being exonerated of their crimes; and,

110 **WHEREAS:** Four of the six people currently on death row in Maryland are black;
120 and,

130 **WHEREAS:** All six people currently on death row were convicted of murdering
140 white victims, although 80% of homicide victims in the state of
150 Maryland are black; and,

160 **WHEREAS:** A comprehensive University of Maryland study of the death penalty in
170 Maryland found that defendants accused of killing white victims are
180 significantly more likely to face the death penalty than those accused of
190 killing non-white victims; and,

200 **WHEREAS:** The study also found that black offenders who kill whites are
210 significantly more likely to face the death penalty than any other racial
220 combination; and,

230 **WHEREAS:** Most democratic countries do not permit the death penalty, including
240 Canada, Australia, and nearly all of Europe; and,

250 **WHEREAS:** Studies in many death penalty states have shown the high cost of the
260 death penalty, such as a 1993 Duke University study that found that he
270 death penalty costs North Carolina \$2.16 million per execution over the
280 costs of a non-death penalty murder case with a sentence of
290 imprisonment for life; and,

300 **WHEREAS:** A 2000 New York Times survey found that the twelve states that have
310 not enacted the death penalty since it was made permissible by the
320 Supreme Court in 1977 have lower homicide rates than states with the
330 death penalty, and that death penalty states and non-death penalty states
340 are demographically similar, with similar poverty rates, etc; and,

350 **WHEREAS:** The study also found that homicide rates rose and fell roughly
360 symmetrically in death penalty states and non-death penalty states; and,

370 **WHEREAS:** Although the Southern United States accounts for over 80% of
380 executions, it has a higher murder rate than any other region of the
390 country; and,

400 **WHEREAS:** In the state of Maryland, a life sentence without the possibility of

410 parole can be imposed; and,

420 **WHEREAS:** Senator Lisa A. Gladden and Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg have
430 introduced legislation, Senate Bill 211 and House Bill 225, that would
440 abolish the death penalty in the state of Maryland and commute any
450 current death sentences to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

460 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the
470 Maryland General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 211 and House Bill
480 225; and,

490 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the
500 Governor to sign such legislation.

510 **MANDATES:** Lisa A. Gladden, Vice-Chair of Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
520 and Sponsor of SB 211
530 Samuel I. Rosenberg, Vice-Chair of House of Delegates Judiciary
540 Committee and Sponsor of HB 225
550 Martin J. O'Malley, Governor of Maryland
560 Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Maryland Senate
570 Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
580 Brian E. Frosh, Chair of Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
590 Joseph F. Vallario, Chair of House of Delegates Judiciary Committee

SPONSOR:

Ryan Walden, Comptroller of the Maryland Student Legislature
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Email: rwalden1@umbc.edu