

RESOLUTION FOR THE UUCLV CONGREGATION'S JUNE 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

WHEREAS, in the last 54 years, the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly approved five anti-death penalty/capital punishment resolutions and an “action of immediate witness” in 2000, which call for:

1961—UUA churches and fellowships “to exert all reasonable efforts toward the elimination of capital punishment,”

1966— the complete abolition of capital punishment in the US and Canada and urging member churches and fellowships to work for the formation of state councils affiliated with the American League to Abolish Capital Punishment and to support the Canadian Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty,

1974—“all Unitarian Universalists and their local churches and fellowships to oppose any attempts to restore or continue it in any form,”

1979—gubernatorial action to commute death sentences and to prevent the restoration of capital punishment (This is in response to Florida’s announced intent to resume with more than 100 delayed executions.),

1989—putting an end to the execution of youths 16 years old and younger and those determined to be mentally retarded, and

2000—asking state governors to commute all existing death sentences and to prevent its restoration in any form while urging congregations to work with other organizations as well as increasing efforts to persuade governors to “forgo capital punishment.” (This statement was generated in response to the 2000 execution of Texan Gary Graham, the 222nd person to be executed in Texas since 1982.)

WHEREAS, The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley (UUCLV) unanimously approved a resolution in June of 2007 supporting a death penalty moratorium in Pennsylvania,

AND WHEREAS, on Feb. 13, 2015 Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf announced his intent to effect a death penalty moratorium until he has received and reviewed the forthcoming report of the Pennsylvania Senate Task Force and Advisory Commission on Capital Punishment, established under Senate Resolution 6 of 2011, and there is an opportunity to address all findings satisfactorily,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the UUCLV supports Pennsylvania Gov. Wolf’s death penalty moratorium until such time as capital punishment in Pennsylvania is thoroughly studied and further action can be taken to rectify the injustices of capital punishment sentences as they are currently imposed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to Gov. Wolf, Northampton and Lehigh county district attorneys, and Lehigh Valley state legislators.