

Position Statement on Moratorium on Capital Punishment in the United States

Approved, 2000; Reaffirmed, 2007
Reaffirmed by the Assembly, November 2014
Reaffirmed by the Board, December 2014

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees...These are...position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." – *APA Operations Manual*.

Whereas the American Bar Association has concluded that the death penalty is administered in an unfair and arbitrary manner and has recommended a moratorium on executions until proper reforms are implemented; and

Whereas psychiatrists, due to their involvement in and familiarity with the criminal justice system, have become increasingly aware of the weaknesses and

deficiencies of the current capital sentencing process including considerations in regard to the mentally ill and developmentally disabled;

The American Psychiatric Association endorses a moratorium on capital punishment in the United States until jurisdictions seeking to reform the death penalty implement policies and procedures to assure that capital punishment, if used at all, is administered fairly and impartially in accord with the basic requirements of due process.

The statement, prepared by the Council on Psychiatry and Law, was approved as amended, with the proviso that the language is intended neither as an endorsement nor a statement of disapproval of the death penalty.