

55TH DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Title: Diocese of Arizona Opposition to Capital Punishment

Proposed by: David Spence, M.D.

Delegate submitting text: The Rev. Deacon Scott Deasy, M.D.

WHEREAS in the Sixth Commandment, God said, "You shall not kill;" and

WHEREAS when Jesus encountered a woman about to be stoned to death, He instructed the crowd: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." [John 8:7]; and

WHEREAS each week in the Eucharist we pray, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us . . . and deliver us from evil. . ."; and

WHEREAS nineteen states have no death penalty statute, and another twelve states have not executed anyone for a period of 5 years; Arizona has killed thirty-seven inmates since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, ranking Arizona the 10th highest state in the number of executions in the United States; and

WHEREAS consummated capital punishment cannot reversed when innocence is later proven; and since there have been 8 exonerations of death row inmates in Arizona, we cannot with assurance say each of the remaining 123 death row inmates in Arizona is actually guilty; and

WHEREAS the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has declared its opposition to capital punishment in resolutions passed in 1958, in 1969, in 1979, in 1991, and in 2000.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Diocese of Arizona declares its opposition to capital punishment in Arizona and that this declaration be communicated to each parish, to the media and to legislators;

AND BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, in considering what would Jesus do, that Diocesan staff, convention attendees, clergy, and individual Arizona Episcopalians are urged to bear witness, to demonstrate and to speak out in private and in public against Arizona's continued use of capital punishment;

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the entire Arizona Episcopal church actively support (thru gathering signatures and campaigning for passage) the

initiative #1-16-2016 which would repeal Arizona's death penalty and replace it with a maximum sentence of life in prison without the option of parole.