

Abington Monthly Meeting Death Penalty Minute

For 340 years the members of Abington Monthly Meeting in Jenkintown, PA have upheld the Friends/Quaker Peace Testimony that guides us to treasure and actively protect the sanctity of human life. As a Religious Society of Friends, we uphold nonviolence which precludes state sanctioned execution. We believe that our Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should not execute anyone in our name, as well as with our subsidy and implicit support.

Prior to 1976, Pennsylvania carried out 1,040 executions, the third highest number of any state. The death penalty was ruled unconstitutional in 1977, but the law was revised and reinstated in 1978. Although only three executions have been carried out since then, due in part to moratoriums by our last and present governors, a change in governors could result in their resumption. Currently, there are 94 people on death row. Since 1978, thirteen innocent people have been sentenced to death, only to be exonerated later.* Twenty-three U.S. states have abolished the death penalty.

The death penalty is an anathema to our religious convictions. It is cruel and inhumane.

As Quakers, we believe that there is that of the divine in each person. We are holding all those on death row in the light. We call for the abolition of the death penalty in Pennsylvania.

*Sources include Pennsylvanians Against the Death Penalty and www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

May, 2025