

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

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"Capital punishment is so inconsistent with the underlying values of our democratic system -- the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness -- that the imposition of the death penalty for any crime is a denial of civil liberties." -- ACLU Policy

"Florida officials, anticipating that executions will be resumed there eventually, announced plans yesterday for a course of seminars to give death row inmates psychological preparation for facing the electric chair." -- Washington Post, July 23

Dear Member:

On July 2nd the Supreme Court ruled that strapping a human being into a chair and pulling a switch that ends a life is not cruel and unusual punishment.

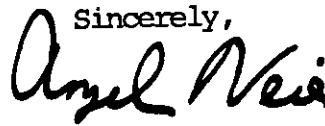
This is a civil liberties emergency. It has been nine years since anyone was legally executed in the United States. Now, more than 300 people -- mostly black, all poor -- are on death row in states whose laws may be valid under the Court's ruling. They are in immediate danger of losing their lives.

Other states whose laws have been invalidated, and even states that have had no death penalty for years, are moving to enact new legislation. Oklahoma has already done so, in a special session called by the governor.

The ACLU is taking the lead in lobbying against the death penalty. We battle daily against this tide. We have mobilized religious, legal and civic organizations into a nationwide coalition to prevent executions. But we cannot prevail without your help.

- We need you to write to your state legislators and to your governors. Urge them to keep the execution chambers closed.
- And we need you to send a special contribution of \$10 -- or more if you can afford it -- so we can mount the kind of lobbying effort needed to persuade politicians that killing its citizens is not the way for this society to solve its problems.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send us a special contribution, and write your state legislators and governors today. It's not often that you're asked to help where it can make a difference between life and death. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Aryeh Neier

AN/AG

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