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**THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ILLINOIS
URGE GOVERNOR QUINN TO SIGN DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION BILL**

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Following last week's approval by the Illinois House of Representatives, the Illinois State Senate approved Senate Bill 3539 on Tuesday. This landmark legislation to abolish the death penalty in Illinois now awaits Governor Quinn's approval. The Catholic Bishops of Illinois urge the Governor to sign the bill.

In a letter to State Senators before their historic votes, the Bishops explained their support: "This important legislation advances the development of a culture of life in our state, a state that remains a haven for those who kill unborn children."

Capital punishment is no longer required to protect Illinois' citizens. Life without parole and Illinois' Truth in Sentencing laws can and must be used to guarantee that the guilty offenders who would have been put to death under the previous system will instead spend the rest of their lives in prison.

Moreover, Illinois' long experience with the death penalty has unfortunately proven, time and again, the irredeemable flaws inherent to the system. Even subsequent to death penalty reforms instituted after former Governor George Ryan imposed the moratorium, authorities have pursued the death penalty against those later proven innocent. There can be no guarantee that the death penalty would not again be imposed on an innocent person. This threat is too great to ignore.

The death penalty in Illinois should be abolished.