



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Capital Jury instructions should be truthful

Support HB 252 (Moody) | SB 189 (Lucio)

The current criminal justice system has both the tools for life imprisonment without execution and has significant flaws in sentencing practices that undermine the ability for the public to trust that every convicted person on death row in Texas is actually guilty. A capital jury has a tremendous burden of determining whether an inmate lives or dies. Jurors carry the weight of this decision and its impact for the rest of their lives.

SUPPORT HB 252/SB 189 CAPITAL JURY INSTRUCTIONS



Current Texas law is intentionally misleading - requiring judges and attorneys to lie to jurors about the level of unanimity required for a death sentence.

Improve the rights of jurors:
STOP REQUIRING JUDGES AND ATTORNEYS TO LIE.



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These bills improve the rights of jurors serving in death penalty sentencing cases. Texas law is intentionally misleading as it requires judges and attorneys to lie to jurors about the level of unanimity required for a death sentence.

It only takes one juror to grant life without parole, yet sentencing instructions require the judge to tell jurors it takes two.

It is unconscionable that a judge swears all witnesses to take an oath to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” and then is instructed to lie to the jury. Even if one supports the use of the death penalty, jurors deserve the truth about the process.

The Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is admissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.”

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Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2267

The Texas bishops strongly support efforts to revise capital jury sentencing instructions to prevent this concealment of a juror's individual capacity to impose a sentence less than death. While we will continue our efforts to end the use of the death penalty in Texas, this legislation will at least interject a level of honesty and improve the fairness of the current system.

HB 252 and SB 189 remove directives that require judges and attorneys to lie to jurors about the level of unanimity required for a death sentence. The TCCB supports this bill which will improve the rights of jurors serving in death penalty sentencing cases.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is the association of the Roman Catholic bishops of Texas. The TCCB represents 16 dioceses and 20 active bishops. Through the TCCB, the bishops provide a moral and social public policy voice, accredit the state's Catholic schools, and maintain archives that reflect the work and the history of the Catholic Church in Texas.