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The California Catholic Conference issued this statement in September 2010, just days before a subsequent execution that was later cancelled.

*Most Reverend Gerald Wilkerson, Auxiliary Bishop for the San Fernando Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and President of the California Catholic Conference, released the following statement today expressing strong support for an end to the use of the death penalty in California and asking for clemency for any individual scheduled for execution.*

The California Catholic Conference strongly supports an end to the use of the death penalty and affirms the 2005 statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, which launched the U.S. Bishops Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty.

In light of the fact that California has scheduled the September 29, 2010 execution of Albert Greenwood Brown for the rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl, Susan Jordan, in 1980, we implore all Californians to ask themselves what good comes of state-sanctioned killing. We recognize the profound pain of those who lost a loved one to violence and offer them our prayers and our consolation. However, nothing can undo what was done—even taking the life of the convicted killer. The infliction of the death penalty does not make for a more just society.

As Catholic bishops, we teach and preach the Gospel vision of a “culture of life.” We believe that each human person is created in God’s image. We are compelled to teach a consistent ethic of life and to speak publicly that the use of the death penalty does not protect human life, does not promote human dignity, and does not reduce violence in our society.

We recognize that human beings can and do commit grievous crimes, but we reject the use of the death penalty—especially when we can protect society with an alternate penalty of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. In addition, of particular concern to us is the fact that the application of the death penalty is deeply flawed—with those who are poor or from racial minorities most often its subjects.

At this moment in time, we entreat Californians to ponder carefully whether the use of the death penalty makes our society safer. A moratorium is needed to evaluate whether the death penalty serves the common good and safeguards the dignity of human life. We are convinced that it does not.