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DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE OVERWHELMINGLY VOTES TO REPEAL DEATH PENALTY

State May Become Seventh State in Seven Years to Abolish Capital Punishment

WASHINGTON, DC – The New Hampshire House of Representatives today passed HB 1170 to replace the death penalty with a sentence of life without parole by a wide margin of 225-104. The bill would apply to future crimes, leaving one person on the state's death row. If passed by the Senate and signed by the governor, New Hampshire would become the seventh state in seven years--and the 19th state overall--to abandon capital punishment. New Hampshire's governor, Maggie Hassan, indicated prior to her election that she would sign such a bill.

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Renny Cushing (D-Hampton), who has worked for years to support victims' families in their efforts to end the death penalty. His own father was murdered in New Hampshire in 1988.

In recent years, Maryland, Connecticut, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, and New York have all ended their use of capital punishment. In the west, three governors have announced a halt to executions in their states: Washington, Colorado, and Oregon. Many other states such as California, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Arkansas have not had an execution in over six years. Only nine states carried out an execution in 2013, with most executions occurring in just 2 states: Texas and Florida.

"The death penalty lingers more as a remnant from another era than as a meaningful part of our criminal justice system," said Richard Dieter, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center. "Death sentences and executions have sharply declined, and now states are taking the final step toward eliminating the death penalty."

The New Hampshire bill garnered support from a broad coalition of murder victims' families, civil rights groups, law enforcement officials, and faith leaders. The bill passed out of the House Criminal Justice and Public Works Committee by a vote of 14-3 on

February 11, with many former supporters of the death penalty voting for repeal. Before today's vote for repeal in the House, an amendment to expand the death penalty was defeated by a vote of 247-83.

To speak with Richard Dieter, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, about national trends or the declining use of the death penalty, please contact DPIC at 202-289-4022 or <dpic@deathpenaltyinfo.org>. For information specific to New Hampshire, contact New Hampshire Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, (603) 230-2335, or Rep. Renny Cushing at (603) 926-2737.

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The Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org) is a non-profit organization serving the media and the public with analysis and information on issues concerning capital punishment. DPIC was founded in 1990 and prepares in-depth reports, issues press releases, conducts briefings for the media, and serves as a resource to those working on this issue.