

# JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

LOYOLA  
UNIVERSITY  
NEW ORLEANS



Connect with  
JSRI on [Twitter](#) &  
[Facebook](#)

Number 70

April 2017

## End Capital Punishment Now

In support of SB 142 and HB 141

by Nik Mitchell, PhD

### JSRI Future Activities

#### April 30-May 2

Fr. Kammer will lead second-year novices from the U.S. Jesuit Central and Southern Province through an introduction to Jesuit justice works and issues.

#### May 13

Fr. Kammer will preside at the Baccalaureate Eucharist for graduates of the Loyola Institute for Ministry.

#### May 15

Fr. Kammer will participate in the board meeting for the national Jesuit Volunteer Corp in Chicago.

### JSRI Recent Activities

#### April 27

JSRI staff met with Matt Cuff, policy advisor for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, to coordinate work on criminal justice reform.

#### April 21

Dr. Weishar participated in a planning meeting at the New Orleans Worker regarding strategies to defeat an anti-sanctuary bill being considered in the Louisiana legislature.

#### April 18

Dr. Weishar provided written testimony in support of ending juvenile life without parole (JLWOP) in Louisiana at a hearing of the Louisiana Senate Committee on Criminal Justice at the State Capital.

#### April 7

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of the Criminal Justice Committee of the Louisiana Interchurch Council.

#### April 4-5

Fr. Kammer chaired the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Ignatian Solidarity Network in Dallas.

#### March 31-April 1

JSRI Advisory Board met on campus.

#### March 28, 2017

Fr. Kammer participated in the Archdiocesan Peacewalk on Loyola's campus, introducing participants to the work of JSRI for social justice.

#### March 28

Dr. Weishar presented a workshop on Advocating for Criminal Justice Reform for Dr. Christian Bolden's honors

Senate Bill 142 and House Bill 141 propose to eliminate capital punishment in Louisiana during this Legislative session. Overall, capital punishment is inherently immoral because it violates the condemned's right to life. It is also a pointless practice, not a deterrent for crime, and a waste of money, time, and manpower. In conceptualization and practice, capital punishment is a continued exercise in futility and too often is an expression of White privilege.

With regard to the conceptualization of capital punishment, it is a faulty practice that relies on the infallibility of the criminal justice system which does not exist; this makes the entire endeavor futile. According to Frank R. Baumgartner and Tim Lyman, from 1976 to 2015 out of 155 resolved death-sentence cases in Louisiana, 127 were reversed, which includes nine exonerations' and 28 ended in execution.[1] Nine people were wrongly convicted and sentenced to death by the State since 1976. It is inhumane and immoral to continue a practice in light of a criminal justice system that cannot guarantee that no innocent person will not be put to death. There is no acceptable margin of error in this regard.



With regard to the practice of capital punishment being an expression of White privilege, it has been and continues to be a racist practice. The last White person in Louisiana to be executed when the victim was Black was a soldier found guilty of stabbing two enslaved Black Women with a bayonet in 1752, which predates the French and Indian War. The data provided by Baumgartner and Lyman shows that between 1976 and 2015 the capital punishment rate for cases in which a Black male killed a Black male was .52 percent, a Black male killed a Black female was 1.44 percent, a Black male killed a White male was 4.27 percent, and a Black male killed a White female was 15.56 percent.

Comparatively, the capital punishment rate for cases in which a White male killed a Black male was .87 percent, a White male killed a Black female was 6.25 percent, a White male Killed a White male was 3.08 percent, and a White male killed a White female was 4.04 percent. The data show that a Black male convicted of killing a White female is 29.9 times more likely to result in the capital punishment than when a Black male kills a Black male and is 10.8 times more likely to than when a Black male kills a Black female. This reveals a racial bias in the application of the capital punishment.

Either argument—faulty practice or expression of White privilege—provides sufficient grounds for abolishing capital punishment in the State of Louisiana. I understand why capital punishment invokes so much emotion. It is understandable to want revenge when a loved one has been violated or killed. The crimes that trigger capital punishment rightly cause revulsion in society. The anger and outrage is just and the pain is real. It is safe to say that the majority of the people of Louisiana support capital punishment in some circumstances. They are wrong.

*N.B. Senate Bill 142 was passed by a Senate Judiciary Committee by a 6 to 1*

**Marcy 27**

Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of Louisianans for Prison Alternatives held at the Southern Poverty Law Center in New Orleans.

[1] Baumgartner, Frank and Lyman, Tim, Louisiana Death Sentenced Cases and Their Reversals, 1976-2015 (April 26, 2016). The Southern University Law Center Journal of Race, Gender, and Poverty, Vol. 7, 2016 . Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2770761>

*Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu)*

[CLICK TO JOIN OUR ADVOCACY NETWORK](#)

## LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

As our number of enrolled students continues to rise, we need to make sure that each and every one has access to an exceptional educational experience. We can't do it without your help. [Give today!](#)

**Published by the Jesuit Social Research Institute**

**Office Phone:** 504- 864-7746 | **E-mail:** [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu) | **Website:** [www.loyno.edu/jsri](http://www.loyno.edu/jsri)  
**Mailing Address:** 6363 St. Charles Avenue, Campus Box 94, New Orleans, LA 70118

6363 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, LA 70118

This email was sent to .  
To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) of all Loyola e-newsletters

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.