

# Chicago Council of Lawyers Chicago Appleseed Fund For Justice

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February 1, 2000

Hon. George H. Ryan  
207 Statehouse  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Ryan:

On behalf of the Chicago Council of Lawyers and the Chicago Appleseed Fund For Justice, I want to commend you on your courageous acts of ordering a moratorium on executions in Illinois and for appointing a commission to review capital punishment in Illinois. In light of our involvement in this issue, I ask that you consider appointing the head of our Death Penalty Committee, Ed McManus, to your commission.

In July 1997, the Appleseed Fund For Justice and the Chicago Council of Lawyers held a press conference to say that too many innocent people were being sent to death row in Illinois for crimes they did not commit. Assembling lawyers, community activists, legislators and persons released from Illinois' Death Row after being exonerated, we announced that we had asked officials from all three branches of state government (including former Governor Jim Edgar) to suspend executions until the death penalty system could be examined and reformed to protect innocent persons accused of capital crimes.

On the legislative front, a legislative bill authored for us by Ed McManus was introduced in the Illinois House. The bill called for temporary reprieves to death row inmates until a nonpartisan commission could recommend reforms and see those reforms implemented. Another request for a moratorium on executions was placed in an amicus brief presented to the Illinois Supreme Court.

Today, your actions will hopefully make it possible that we can examine capital punishment from the viewpoint of the public interest. We would very much like to part of this important endeavor. Please have any of your staff contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director  
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