

## **AFSC Central Region St. Louis Stories, Spring 2008**

### **The City of St. Louis Takes a Stand Against the War**

*Lori Reed, International Affairs Program Director, St. Louis  
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AFSC collaborated with the St. Louis Board of Aldermen on a peace resolution calling for an immediate cessation of the war in Iraq. Testimony before the subcommittee on intergovernmental affairs was given by Veterans for Peace, members of the labor community and others. The hearing was very moving and powerful. The resolution gained numerous cosponsors and was passed with many alder people making powerful statements of support. (The resolution is online at <http://www.afsc.org/central/StLouisAnti-WarResolution2-22-08.rtf>.)

AFSC is collaborating with Veterans for Peace in creating a campaign to highlight the persisting issues raised by Dr. Martin Luther King decades ago. "Reclaiming the Dream" will highlight Dr. King's wisdom on persisting issues such as United States militarism, poverty and the Death Penalty. The International Affairs program spoke to Dr. King's legacy as a peace activist at the kickoff event on Dr. King's birthday.

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### **Working Against the Death Penalty**

*By Faheemah Thabit, St. Louis Area Program Coordinator  
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AFSC assisted with organizing a speaking event and lobby day in Jefferson City, Missouri for the Death Penalty Moratorium Bill. This bill will allow Missouri to halt all executions while studying the current death penalty process. The Lobby Day event had a great turn out, with approximately 130 people participating.

I spoke as a victim family member who does not support the death penalty. Joe Amrine was the guest speaker; he was on death row for 17 years and was released due to DNA evidence. Several AFSC Area Committee members attended the event. During the lobbying, Ponchita Argieard and I left a note for one of the Senators requesting that he support the moratorium bill. The Senator replied by e-mail that he will co-sponsor the bill.

After the plea to the death penalty opponents to call the House Speaker, he finally referred the death penalty moratorium bill, HB 1870, to the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee. Supporters were encouraged to call the House Speaker and thank him for moving the bill to committee. The moratorium bill (SB 800), sponsored by Senator Rita Days, and the abolition bill (SB 835), sponsored Senator Joan Bray, is ready for hearings, which will probably be scheduled sometime after March due to the spring breaks.

We are currently working to get individuals and organizations to sign on to the Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty Resolution. Our goal is to collect 300 endorsements; to date we have collected 286.

The death penalty “listening project” is well underway. AFSC is sponsoring this project with co-sponsors the Organization for Black Struggle and Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty-St. Louis Chapter and the statewide organization. A total of 150 surveys will be conducted throughout the State of Missouri.



Ponchita Argieard attended the lobby day in Jefferson City, MO for the Death Penalty Moratorium Bill.



Edward Bell, AFSC satellite coordinator for the Listening Project in Kansas City, discusses the project with Joyce Miller of AFSC’s Community Relations Unit.