

**ILLINOIS COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY**  
**180 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2300, Chicago, IL 60601**  
**Phone: (312) 849-2279; Fax: (312) 201-9760; Website: [www.icadp.org](http://www.icadp.org)**

For immediate release  
May 27, 2004

Contact: Jane Bohman, Executive Director  
(312) 849-2279 or (C)(312) 213-4250

**ILLINOIS COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY  
RESPONDS TO EXONERATION OF 18<sup>TH</sup> DEATH ROW INMATE**

(Chicago) . . . The Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty today responded to the media report that Randy Steidl, who spent 12 years on Illinois' death row, will not be retried and will be released.

“The vindication of the innocence of Randy Steidl shows once again how the criminal justice system can go haywire when a defendant's life is at stake,” commented Jane Bohman, Executive Director of the Coalition. “The remarkable thing about this case is how many problems plagued Mr. Steidl's trial, including ineffective assistance of counsel, the unreliability of the witnesses used by the prosecution and lack of corroboration of their testimony, and the total lack of physical evidence against the defendant,” continued Bohman.

“Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the State Appellate Prosecutor's Office are to be commended for recognizing the utter lack of evidence against Mr. Steidl and declining to further appeal or prosecute the matter,” said Bohman. “However, the continued exoneration of death row inmates as well as other inmates within the Illinois criminal justice system and ongoing flaws in the capital punishment process make it imperative that the moratorium on executions remains in place while the Illinois legislature studies whether the reforms to the capital punishment system are effective”, Bohman remarked.

Finally, the fact that an eighteenth innocent person was condemned to death by our criminal justice system underscores the need for our public officials to fully debate the future of capital punishment in this state in light of the systemic problems within the system. “The only way to ensure that an innocent man or woman is not executed is to repeal the death penalty. With the existing alternate sentence of life without the possibility of parole, the most serious offenders can be punished and public safety protected,” Bohman concluded.