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June 29, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Clemency for Death Row Prisoner Kevin Cooper**

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the California Catholic Conference of Bishops, I request that you grant clemency to Kevin Cooper. I ask you to grant a reprieve from execution and open a thorough investigation to review Kevin Cooper's conviction.

We expect a new investigation will bring to light Mr. Cooper's innocence. A preponderance of evidence has been submitted to you from judges, lawyers and others, which strongly supports our contention.

The case of Kevin Cooper is another example of flawed justice. He was prosecuted, tried, and convicted in an atmosphere of racial hatred 30 years ago.

Kevin Cooper has now served 30 years in prison, and remains on death row, despite the evidence that acquits him. The system of Capital punishment is a precarious, arbitrary means of justice. The practice continues to undermine society's foundational commitment to human dignity.

In the words of our Holy Father, just this week from Oslo, capital punishment "is an offence to the inviolability of life and to the dignity of the human person." and "it likewise contradicts God's plan for individuals and society, and his merciful justice."

Use your full authority in this matter. Please grant a reprieve and reopen the investigation into this dubious death sentence. Be assured of my prayers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaime Soto", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

+ Jaime Soto  
President, California Catholic Conference  
Bishop of Sacramento