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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org
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November 25, 2014

The Honorable Keith Faber
President
Ohio State Senate
Statehouse
1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: American Medical Association opposition to House Bill 663

Dear Senator Faber:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, the AMA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill (H.B.) 663, a bill that would make changes to Ohio's capital punishment procedures.

Physicians are fundamentally healers dedicated to preserving life when there is hope of doing so. To act as an agent of the state in assisting, supervising or contributing to a legally authorized execution is fundamentally incompatible with that role, no matter how one feels about capital punishment. We are deeply troubled by the continuous refusal of states to acknowledge the ethical obligations of physicians that strictly prohibit involvement in capital punishment. The AMA's policy is clear and unambiguous – requiring physicians to participate in executions violates their oath to protect lives and introduces deep ambiguity into the very definition of medical care. Any involvement by physicians in executions is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as a healer. Such involvement would violate core ethical obligations of the medical profession to "first, do no harm" and to respect human dignity and rights.

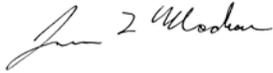
The State of Ohio has adopted the AMA's *Code of Medical Ethics* in its entirety as the standard for professionalism in medicine, and pursuant to Section 4731.22(B)(18) of the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio State Medical Board has jurisdiction to impose discipline upon a physician for violations of the *Code of Medical Ethics*. The issue is simple. We believe it is inappropriate for a state legislature to carve out sections of the AMA *Code of Medical Ethics* as unenforceable. If passed, H.B. 663 would do this very thing. It would usurp the State Medical Board of Ohio's authority and ability to discipline physicians who violate the well-established principle of medical ethics that prohibits physician participation in capital punishment.

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Based on above, we strongly urge the Ohio legislature to proceed with caution in considering H.B. 663 and work to remove physician participation in capital punishment proceedings.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Armour, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at carrie.armour@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4039.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Members of the Ohio State Senate
Ohio State Medical Association