

New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty



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David Kaczynski

June 24, 2008

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Jeffrey Deskovic has been an integral part of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty's campaign to repeal capital punishment in New York since soon after his release from prison in September 2006, following sixteen years of incarceration for a murder and rape that he did not commit. Jeffrey has been a keynote speaker at approximately 40 NYADP-organized events at colleges, law schools, churches, high schools and community meetings from Long Island to Buffalo. He has appeared at press conferences, legislative hearings and has lobbied state lawmakers on capital punishment and the need to reform New York's criminal justice system to reduce the frequency of wrongful convictions. He has been featured in a number of media interviews and in a front page Sunday *New York Times* article that focused on his re-adjustment to society after spending nearly half his life imprisoned.

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As NYADP's executive director, I have worked closely with Jeffrey over much of this time. I have introduced him as a speaker, teamed with him in lobbying sessions, stood shoulder to shoulder with him at press conferences, listened to his testimony at Assembly hearings, and read his published writings. Thus, I have been able to closely follow his rapid development as a social justice advocate over the past year and a half.

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I can say without qualification that Jeffrey has been NYADP's most effective and well-received public speaker since early 2007. He blends credibility, authenticity, clarity and emotional balance in a way that few public speakers can match. Ultimately, he succeeds in using his personal tragedy to shine a light on the patterns of unfairness that exist in our legal system. In lobbying sessions and public question-and-answer sessions, he displays both intellectual agility and thoughtfulness, leaving an impression of wisdom gained through incredible adversity.

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In my opinion, Jeffrey has the persuasive skills, motivation, strategic judgment and heart to make important contributions to the cause of justice. Just as importantly, he embodies resilience and hope – qualities that are sorely needed to lift us above the inhumanity and indifference that haunt our current criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

David Kaczynski
Executive Director

Affiliations for identification only

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