

# Caucus gets hard-nosed

The Legislative Black Caucus finally has begun to show it not only isn't kidding about being opposed to the restoration of the death penalty in Maryland but intends to fight hard against it.

The Caucus, headed by Senator Robert Douglass, is now making itself felt in an impressive manner in the House of Delegates.

Earlier, a member of the Caucus, Senator Clarence Mitchell III, in a one-man filibuster against the death penalty, fired the first big shot for the opposition.

Since his attack there has been no doubt that a fight was in store for those anxious to resume state murders in Maryland under the mistaken belief such a step will deter criminals. Executions have not eradicated nor probably deterred crime anywhere in the world.

The death penalty legislation before the General Assembly is one of those issues on which there can be no compromise. It is not one on

which a legislator should be encouraged to vote yes in payment for some past or future political favor.

Black lawmakers certainly cannot barter on this life-and-death question.

There simply are no persuasive arguments in favor of the death penalty.

Something that does not work but at the same time discriminates against black and other poor citizens cannot be justified.

Every day the House delays final action on death penalty legislation, the better the chances to kill it later in the Senate.

Although many don't agree, we think even the short delay resulting from Senator Mitchell's filibuster will prove to have been important.

The Black Caucus is flexing its muscles on an important issue about which there admittedly is considerably honest disagreement. But the Caucus is on the right side and should stick to its guns no matter the cost.