EXHIBIT 12
DATE 3/15/2011
SB 185

March 15, 2011

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jim Kizer, and I am former Police Officer from Great Falls. I served on the police department for 10 years, and now serve as the director of the Great Falls Rescue Mission.

As a young member of law enforcement I was absolutely in favor of the death penalty and would have considered myself an avid supporter of the policy. During my time at the law enforcement academy, I had the opportunity to research the issue of deterrence and its effects on those who commit the most heinous of crimes. During this research, I discovered the facts that would eventually lead me to be against the death penalty. I have detailed some of the most compelling deterrence research below.

No credible study has found that the death penalty deters crime. A 2009 study published in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology concluded that "there is overwhelming consensus among America's top criminologists that the empirical research conducted on the deterrence question fails to support the threat or use of the death penalty."

In 2008, a scientific poll of police chiefs across the country found that almost 6 in 10 police chiefs agreed that the death penalty does little to prevent violent crimes because perpetrators rarely consider the consequences when engaged in violence.

Moreover, the death penalty was ranked last when the police chiefs were asked to name one area as "most important for reducing violent crime," with only 1% listing it as the best way to reduce violence. The police chiefs also ranked the death penalty as the least efficient use of taxpayers' money.

It should also be noted that regions with the most executions have the highest murder rates. Though the South has over 80% of the United States' executions, the region's murder rate is the highest in the nation.

It is for these reasons that I urge you to support Senate Bill 185 to replace the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jim Kizer

March 14, 2011

To the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Bob Wallace. I am a former Dillon police officer and I spent 32 years working in Montana State prisons as a teacher and creator of pre-release centers. I have seen and experienced a lot with our most violent inmates. At one time in the prison an inmate tried to kill me with a shard of glass.

I have come to the conclusion that the death penalty does not serve a purpose anymore and it should be repealed. I can tell you the violent men I observed never thought about the consequences of their actions. Many were mentally ill and did not have that capacity.

I do believe that a maximum-security prison is the right home for some. I do not believe the death penalty makes the prison any safer at all.

There is absolutely no room for violence to take place in our maximum-security prison. If we classify prisoners according to protocol and follow all the procedures, the chances of violence really are quite minimal. It is our fault if something goes wrong. Violence only occurs when we fail to adhere to a policy or procedure. We have gotten so much better over the years as best practices were put into place and now prison killings are not occurring in our state prisons.

We need continued resources to train our hard working corrections officers. We need to staff prisons well and have up to date facilities.

I don't think I could ever participate in an execution and feel so much for my fellow staff who have done so. We don't know what the lasting ramifications of this are.

I think it's interesting to note that the majority of executions that have taken place in our state were performed on people who gave up their appeals. They preferred being put to death rather than spend more time in prison.

This is a policy that has no clear benefits. It does not make our prisons or us safer. We can do that much better by putting resources into policies that directly affect our safety.

I would be happy to talk with you further about any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Bob Wallace
846-3804