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To the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing this to express my support of the abolition of the death penalty as a means of punishment in our great state.

A little background about myself, I was raised to believe that punishment for a crime should fit the acts of that crime, an eye for an eye if you will. I worked for ten years as a law enforcement officer and was in fact a staunch supporter of the death penalty during much of my career. As a law enforcement officer I paid close attention to the issues surrounding all aspects of crime and punishment. My views were easy for me to defend and I never envisioned the day that I would change those long held beliefs on the death penalty.

As anyone in this room can attest, beliefs that we hold as concrete and unchanging, can and should, erode under the constant and relentless voice of truth. That is what compels me write this today.

Very simply put, through my experiences, I have discovered that putting someone to death for criminal acts, regardless of the heinousness of the crime just does not deter that crime nor future crimes. The death penalty is an act of revenge, perpetrated more out of fear and exasperation than out of true justice. I find it difficult to believe that a criminal in a premeditated act actually stops to consider weather the death penalty may be available if he is convicted. I am of the belief that the vast majority of those criminals don't even think they will be caught, let alone weighing life imprisonment against being put to death. It is also obvious to me, that criminals who act out of anger and impulse do not consider the consequences of their acts in the least. They, after all are acting on impulse, the very definition of which includes lack of forethought. In either case, the threat of being put to death by the state has no bearing on their actions.

We are all aware of the travesty of those who have been wrongly convicted, being imprisoned for extended periods, along with cases of those put to death, only to be cleared of these crimes after the fact. In the former there remains the option to correct the mistakes, in the latter there is no such remedy. One such mistake is one too many, are any of you really willing to be a part of such a miscarriage of justice? I personally could not.

We as a society have the obligation and ability to protect our citizens from these dangerous criminals through stiff prison sentences, up to and including natural life behind bars. Please consider my words when you have the opportunity to cast you vote on this matter.

Thank You for allowing me to voice my concern in this vitally important issue.

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