

SENATE BILL 185
EXHIBIT NO. 14
2/8/11
J. S. R.

My name is Mary Kay Raftery. I would like to submit testimony today in favor of Senate Bill 185 to abolish Montana's death penalty. I currently live in San Jose, California. I'm also a member of California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty since 2002.

Our oldest son, Paul Raftery, was murdered December 8th, 2006, in Helena, Montana, by two young men looking for drug money. He had no money in his wallet. I remember asking myself how I felt about the death penalty now. This awful deed didn't change my mind, and I was relieved that the death penalty was never an option. I was having conversations with Paul about my activities with the California People of Faith, and he quietly told me he, too, opposed the death penalty. This was while he was an active law enforcement officer. I was surprised, but very gratified by his response. The family also opposes the death penalty.

I don't understand the concept of closure. After all, putting someone to death, in my case, two people, will never bring my sorely missed son back. The two murderers received sentences of life with the possibility of parole after 55 years, essentially a life sentence. The family felt justice had been served.

But I have a huge argument concerning the cost of the death penalty. I strongly believe that these funds could be better spent for the least among us; the children, the elderly, the mentally ill, and all those families suffering from loss of jobs, food and homes. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in favor of SB 185.