

The Death Penalty Kills the Innocent

The Risk of Killing an Innocent Person

The State of New Hampshire has not conducted an execution since 1939 yet it is the safest state in the nation when it comes to crime (*CQ Press study*). Despite these facts, in 2010 the New Hampshire Legislature and Governor Lynch expanded the death penalty. This law has increased the risk the state could kill an innocent person yet the same politicians have repeatedly refused to pass the FBI recommendations (DIOG) that would protect against wrongful convictions.* This is dangerous public policy that is not justified by any known research or study.

Over 140 innocent men and women placed on death row have been exonerated since 1973. These exonerations have revealed cases that are riddled with problems including mistaken eyewitness identifications, incompetent lawyers, shoddy forensics, unreliable jailhouse snitches, and coerced confessions. New Hampshire is not immune to these problems in the criminal justice system. But New Hampshire already has a corrections system with the sentence of life without the possibility of parole for first degree murder that ensures public safety and also eliminates the risk of killing an innocent human being.

“Don’t get me wrong, I’m not soft. I have no sympathy for rapists, killers, and those who prey on the most vulnerable in our country. But life without the possibility of parole can keep our communities and prisons safe. Life without parole. It’s the most severe punishment you could ever give. You lock them in a little cage that’s made of concrete and steel with a steel cot and a stainless steel toilet jacket without a lid, and you leave them in there for the rest of their natural lives.”

-Ron McAndrew, prison warden who conducted executions in Florida and Texas, from testimony before the NH Legislative Study Commission on the Death Penalty



“New Hampshire does not deserve a law that can kill innocent people. The death penalty is a law made by human beings. We all know we’re humans; we all make mistakes.”

-Juan Melendez, death row exonoree testifying before the NH Legislative Study Commission on the Death Penalty

Truth Found in DNA

- Hundreds of DNA exonerations have given us a window into all of the things that can go wrong in a criminal case. These cases offer irrefutable evidence of the system’s flaws.
- But DNA by itself cannot solve these problems. DNA evidence exists in less than 15% of criminal cases - far fewer than needed to ensure against wrongful convictions.
- In those few cases where DNA evidence is available, defense access to testing and experts can be limited by the Courts and personal finances.

 **NEW HAMPSHIRE
COALITION TO
ABOLISH THE
DEATH PENALTY**
www.nodeathpenaltyNH.org

* [http://vault.fbi.gov/FBI Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide \(DIOG\)](http://vault.fbi.gov/FBI%20Domestic%20Investigations%20and%20Operations%20Guide%20(DIOG))