

# *Does the Death Penalty Do More Harm Than Good?*

## **Executioners Experience Secondary Trauma**

Every death sentence requires a team of executioners who are involved with the details of killing the death row inmate. Corrections officers, wardens, doctors, nurses and EMTs are required to actively take part in and witness the ritualized death of another human being. Yet the burden on those who carry out an execution is rarely considered when people discuss the issue of capital punishment.

Scientific research and anecdotal testimony show that members of execution teams suffer for some time after taking part in killing an inmate. Several executioners in the United States have committed suicide. Others have developed substance abuse issues and chronic mental health problems as the aftermath of their participation in executions.

**“Judges, prison guards and attorneys involved in these cases are all experiencing PTSD.”**

*-- Dr. Len Korn, NH Psychiatrist*

## **Executions Promote Violence and Interfere with Healing**

Executions create more victims. The family members of the defendant must also cope with the killing of a loved one, in addition to the shame and sorrow for what he or she has done to others.

**“Killing is still killing - even if it is state sanctioned.”**

*-- Margaret Hawthorn, whose daughter was murdered in Henniker, NH, testifying at the New Hampshire Senate Judiciary Committee hearing*



**“I implore you, don’t get into this business. Honor your corrections officers and don’t force them to go through what I went through, what so many of us have gone through and have suffered for [in imposing the death penalty].”**

*- Ron McAndrew, prison warden who executed death sentences in Florida and Texas, testifying to the New Hampshire Legislative Study Commission on the Death Penalty*

Murder victim family members time and again explain that the death penalty has offered them no help with healing – only the repeated re-opening of the painful scars of their loss.

**“Until my sister’s murder I always thought I was for the death penalty. I thought people who kill other people should have to die themselves. And then someone killed my sister and her two beautiful babies. My heart broke. Killing is senseless. All killing needs to end. If you care about victims’ families and justice, please do the work that needs to be done to abolish the death penalty in New Hampshire. It takes courage to stop the violence and stop the cycle of killing.”**

*-- Nancy Filiault, NH resident*



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