

## Statement by Bess Klassen-Landis

I urge New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu to sign the legislation to abolish New Hampshire's death penalty. My mother was murdered when I was a child 49 years ago and I will continually be healing from that event. What gets in the way of healing is hate and fear.

My deep healing really began when I got to know other murder victim family members who did not embrace hate or fear or the death penalty, as well as many innocent individuals exonerated from death row.

I learned that the death penalty is not reserved for the "worst of the worst." A defendant's life will more likely depend upon what state and county the crime is committed in, the race of the victim and the financial resources of the defendant.

Joseph Nadeau, a former New Hampshire Supreme Court justice and judge of 37 years, refutes the claim that the death penalty is needed to honor law enforcement officers: "Its abolition does not dishonor those who serve in law enforcement because honor comes from personal pride and earned respect, not from the ability of the state to execute a human being."

When a prison cell can be used to safeguard a community, yet the state argues to take a life instead, I believe all of society suffers from the increased violence and loss of our collective humanity. Do the right thing, Gov. Sununu: Deliver all of us from the death penalty.

*Hanover Friends Meeting*

*Hanover NH*

