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May 17, 2018

Governor Sununu
Office of the Governor
State House
Concord, NH 03301



Dear Governor Sununu:

My name is Laura Bonk and I am a New Hampshire citizen. I write this letter as a family member directly impacted by homicide. Almost 30 years ago, my 47 year old mother was murdered. My 16 year old sister was also shot at the same time. After several surgeries, my sister mostly recovered. Most of my adult life, I have lived with the trauma of a homicide.

The shooting took place on a Sunday afternoon. My mother was visiting an elderly woman who was suffering from dementia. The woman's son shot my mother and sister as they sat at the kitchen table. It was a senseless crime.

The murder profoundly and deeply altered my life and the lives of my family, neighbors, and friends. We all did not feel safe. How could a murder happen in a quiet neighborhood? How could a murder interrupt the good deed of checking on an elderly person?

My mother opposed the death penalty. I ask, as a citizen of New Hampshire, that you allow the repeal of the death penalty. It would honor me, and most importantly, my mother. Furthermore, our elected officials, one of the largest legislative bodies in the world, have voted to abolish the death penalty. They represent New Hampshire citizens and they have voted accordingly.

The unexpected death of a loved one is always a tremendous shock; however, when the death is a homicide, the victims become part of our government that few people experience. I remember a trial that was postponed several times—each postponement created debilitating anxiety and stress. It was more than a year later before the trial began. We all wanted justice and we wanted it swiftly. The postponements only prolonged our agony. More than one year was a horrible wait. The length of time in capital punishment appeals must cause great harm to the victim's family.

As a New Hampshire taxpayer, I would like my tax dollars to be spent not on absurdly expensive capital punishment trials, but on identifying the 3

unknown murdered children whose bodies were found in Allenstown. I would like the more than 100 unsolved homicide cases to be solved. These are more important causes for our justice system. These cases are deeply important for the families of murder victims and warrant our tax dollars.

Time passes and a decade ago, while I was preparing dinner at my home here in New Hampshire, my aunt called me. She told me that the murderer died of natural causes in prison. There is a false belief that death brings closure to family members. It does no such thing. The murderer's death does not bring your loved one back. It does not help the victims heal.

Today, for me and my murdered mother, I plead that you allow the repeal of the death penalty in New Hampshire. New Hampshire will be a better place without it.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Bonk