

# *How Much Does the Death Penalty Cost New Hampshire?*

Michael Addison, convicted and sentenced to death for the 2006 murder of Manchester police officer Michael Briggs, would be the first death row inmate to be executed in NH since 1939. Addison's prosecution has cost the state **\$2.3 million** as of September 2013.

The defense effort has cost taxpayers even more, **\$2.6 million**.

Most defendants in capital cases are not ultimately sentenced to death and even when they are, fewer than 25% are executed, with an average wait of about 13 years. This is why the national cost to perform a single execution is a daunting \$30 million. New Hampshire has sought the death penalty in just four other trials in the last 70 years. Only Addison has received the death sentence.

## **Addison Versus Non-Capital Murder Trials**

- The average non-capital defense costs between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Prosecution costs are similar.
- Jurors summoned: 1200 in Addison, 300 on average for the previous four non-capital trials
- Number of judge days: 53 in Addison, enough for five non-capital cases
- Length of jury selection: 17 days for Addison, 3.5 days average
- Length of trial: 36 days for Addison, 6.5 days average
- Superior Court cost: \$166,000 for Addison, \$13,000 on average
- Addison security costs: an additional \$21,922 for staff, plus \$12,000 for a new defendant's holding area

## **Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied**

The Supreme Court cost for this single high-profile case, including an extra law clerk at \$60,000 per year since 2008, has come entirely from the bare-bones Supreme Court budget. The result is a huge backlog in appeals. "It is likely the oral arguments will be delayed in many cases for a period of months," the court told lawmakers in 2013.

## **The Future Will Be Expensive**

The Supreme Court case is less than half finished. The entire appeal could cost millions by the time Addison exhausts his rights

in federal court as a much older man. If Addison loses all of his appeals, the state will need to build a death chamber, which state officials estimated in 2010 would cost \$1.7 million.



## **\$5 Million and Counting...**

### **DEATH COSTS MORE THAN LIFE**

*The death penalty's complexity, length and finality drive trial costs through the roof. Capital punishment is far more costly than life without parole at \$35,000 per year. The reality is that death penalty cases postpone justice for victims' families and devour millions of dollars that could solve cold cases, prevent crime, rehabilitate offenders, restore victims, and protect the public better.*



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