

Dear Liberty Committee Members

June 29, 2022

Good afternoon. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I am here on behalf of the Murder Victims' Families for Equal Justice. This organization was formed to support those families who lost loved ones due to murder. We offer counseling and resources to families as well as engage in policy issues. One of the issues we advocate for is to support reinstating the death penalty in those states that do not provide it such as the state of Michigan.

In 2021, the U.S. murder rate was the highest it has been in twenty-five years. Several of those cities with the highest murder rates are located in states such as Illinois, New York, Minnesota, and Michigan, that do not have the death penalty.

We believe that the death penalty should be reinstated because of the following:

We believe some crimes are so terrible that people who commit these crimes must be executed if justice is to be done. This position is a version of the view that justice, or an important component of justice, is fundamentally retributive. That is, the appropriate (and, some would say, proportionate) punishment for crimes is the price that criminals must pay, regardless of other possible effects of the punishment such as deterrence. In the case of first-degree murder, the death of the murderer is the appropriate punishment for the crime committed.

We believe that the death penalty may deter some people from committing first degree murder. And even if this cannot be proved, it is certain that a murderer who is legally executed will not murder again.

We believe the death penalty may save the state (which is to say, the taxpayers) money, since incarceration for life at maximum security levels is expensive. For example, according to one source using 1994 federal Justice Department figures, the costs for life without parole in death-penalty equivalent cases, could come to \$3.07 million (\$34,000 a year for 50 years at a two percent annual cost increase plus \$75,000 for trial and appeal), while costs could be as low as \$1.98 million (at \$60,000 a year for six years at a two percent annual cost increase plus \$1.5 million for trial and appeal). If a figure of 8 years on death row is added, the death penalty case costs could rise to \$2.5 million at a two percent annual increase, still nearly \$1 million less than life without parole cases.

We believe that although the United States is a secular democracy with a separation of Church and State, we argue that on Biblical grounds the Judeo-Christian tradition supports the case for the death of murderers.

We believe that it is only right and fair that the Legislature allow the people of the state to decide this important issue. While the polls can be cited that support both sides, the only way to truly find out what the voters of the state want is to submit it to them to vote on.

In closing, we hope the Committee will stand with the victims' families and finally allow them to have equal justice and peace, by supporting the reinstatement of the death penalty in Michigan.