

**SIGN-ON LETTER to
REPEAL THE DEATH PENALTY
for Murder Victims' Families**

Each of us has lost a family member to murder. At a moment none of us could have predicted or prepared for, tragedy robbed from us children, parents, spouses, brothers and sisters, and other family members. Our direct experiences with the criminal justice system and struggling with grief have led us all to the same conclusion: Colorado's death penalty fails victims' families.

We never asked to be in this position and would do anything to change it. We realize, however, that nothing can erase the pain that a senseless act of violence brought into our lives. But we can honor the memory of our loved ones and other families who may face tragedy by working for effective responses to violence.

The reality of the death penalty is that it drags on for decades. In Colorado, only one person has been executed in the last fifty years. Victims' families in capital cases go back to court for years on end where the press replays the details of the crime again and again. The result is that the defendant is turned into a celebrity while the victim's family waits for justice that never comes. This system burdens the vast majority of cases that don't result in a death sentence.

The death penalty is said to be reserved for "particularly heinous murders." We have difficulty understanding this position. The implication is that other murders are "ordinary". From experience, we can tell you that to victims' families, every murder is heinous. As the state hangs onto our broken death penalty system, it wastes millions of dollars that could go toward much-needed victims' services. Instead of investing millions of dollars into a tiny percentage of capital cases the state should prioritize services that would benefit all victims.

As lawmakers consider whether to keep or end Colorado's death penalty, we urge them to make the choice that best serves the interests of victims' families. We hope they will conclude what we have: that the death penalty fails victims' families. We urge them to repeal Colorado's death penalty.

Signed,

Ezra Aldern
Son of murder victim, Wendy Mae Aldern

Bob Autobee
Father of murder victim, Sgt. Eric Jason Autobee

Victoria Baker Willford
Mother of murder victim, Carolyn Jansen of Aurora

Linda Burks-Brown
Sister of murder victim, Willie Frazier of Denver

Brenda Carrasco of Denver
Cousin of murder victim, Brandon Cruz-Sigala

Lisa Cisneros
Daughter of murder victim, Fred Sanchez

Derrick Collins of Denver
Brother of murder victim, Loren Anthony Collins

Senator Lucia Guzman of Denver
Daughter of murder victim, Tom Guzman

Lieutenant L. Hollis of Denver
Uncle of murder victim, Faye Johnson

Arlis Keller of Greeley
Sister of murder victim, Dwight Tobyne

Brian Keller of Greeley
Brother in law of murder victim, Dwight Tobyne

Rosemary Harris Lytle of Colorado Springs
Daughter of murder victim, Johnnie Banks Sr.

Frank D. Lytle of Colorado Springs
Son in law of murder victim, Johnnie Banks Sr.

Alice Randolph of Denver
Mother of murder victim, Loren Anthony Collins

Kristopher Randolph of Denver
Brother of murder victim, Loren Anthony Collins

Bob Rice
Brother in law of murder victim, Bruce VanderJagt, Denver police officer

Gail VanderJagt Rice

Sister of murder victim, Bruce VanderJagt, Denver police officer

Tim Ricard

Husband of murder victim, Sergeant Mary K. Ricard EOW 9-24-2012

Babette Romero Miller of Lochbuie

Aunt of murder victim, Antonio Ray Davalos

Katie Benson Smith

Daughter of murder victim, Sergeant Mary K. Ricard EOW 9-24-2012

Kelvin Smith, Jr.

Grandson of murder victim, Sergeant Mary K. Ricard EOW 9-24-2012