

Testimony in support of SB 19-182

Brenda Carrasco - murder victims' family member

Denver, CO

As a family member of a victim of homicide, I have deep concerns about the Death Penalty - the toll it has on the victims families. For the vast majority of cases where the death penalty is used, families endure years of highly publicized trials, appeals, and waiting for an execution. Millions of dollars are siphoned into prosecutions that could be invested in victim assistance, including helping the family's with counseling or services needed after a violent incident happens in one's life.

Not to mention this is money that would be better invested in the front line in fighting crime.

Capital punishment is barbaric, unjustified retribution, and as we all know, internationally it's viewed as inhumane and anachronistic.

Yet we as a Western democracy still participate in this indecency.

Murder, whether State-sponsored, or by a criminal, is abhorrent and demonstrates a lack of respect for human life. A society that respects life doesn't deliberately kill human beings.

Colorado having a policy of State authorized killings is extremely immoral and does not represent who WE are as a State.

Executions, these violent public spectacles that endorse killing to solve social issues are hypocritical.

We must stop instilling this as a value to uphold in our younger generations. Capital punishment is not a deterrent to capital crimes.

Violence only begets violence.

I'm also deeply troubled by the numerous studies that have found racial bias in death sentencing. Effective counsel isn't available to the poor, and in our society, racial minorities are disproportionately poor.

90% of those on death row could not afford to hire attorney's when they were tried.

It's time to end this clearly broken system that is the Death penalty in the USA.

# SAM CARY

January 21, 2019

David Sabados  
Executive Director  
Coloradans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Dear Mr. Sabados,

The Sam Cary Bar Association ("SCBA") understands a bill will be introduced in this legislative session to repeal Colorado's death penalty.

The SCBA Executive Committee met and voted to support death penalty repeal. We are in favor of repealing the death penalty because a disproportionate number of people of color, especially African Americans, receive the death penalty in America. Although African Americans make up 13 percent of the population, they make up 42 percent of death row and 35 percent of those executed.

There have been several studies across our nation that indicate that defendants are much more likely to be sentenced to death if there is a white victim. As of 2002, 178 black defendants were executed for murders with white victims, compared to 12 white defendants executed for murders with black victims. There have been 509 African Americans executed in the United States since 1976.

A statistical analysis of more than 500 Colorado prosecutions from 1999 to 2010 revealed that nonwhite defendants are five times more likely to face the death penalty than their white counterparts. Of the 22 capital cases tried in those years, only two were against white defendants. There are currently three people on death row in Colorado, all three of which are African Americans. A repeal of the death penalty would end the prejudice and systemic racial bias in the application of the death penalty within our state.

Please let us know when the bill is introduced and whether any legislative hearings are scheduled.

Sincerely,



Joyce Arhanenda, Treasurer  
Sam Cary Bar Association