

## Judiciary Committee

### SUPPORT for HB-6578 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR A CAPITAL FELONY

March 4, 2009

#### Testimony of Dr. Antoinette Bosco

In the Fall of 2005, I was greatly honored when I received an invitation from the Catholic Bishops to come to Washington, D.C. to participate in the work they called the “Catholic Campaign to end the Use of the Death Penalty. At their meeting in Washington, D.C. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn , set the tone, asking: “What does the death penalty do to us? What kind of society do we want to be?” He noted that this is “not a liberal issue, but a life issue.” And he underscored, “In the matter of life and death, no mistake is acceptable. Death is irreversible.”

The Bishops had invited me because I am the mother of murder victims. My son John and his wife Nancy were killed back in August 1993 as they slept in their newly purchased home in Montana, blown away by the 18-year old son of the people from whom they had just bought the house.

The Bishops wanted me to speak out and say why I and my family had become outspoken opponents of the death penalty. We gave our heart-deep, honest answer—that unnatural death is an evil, no matter whose hand stops the breath. We can punish killers by taking away their freedom, nor their breath.

I well remember when the Catholic Bishops first called for an end to the death penalty some thirty years ago. I was proud of my Church then, and ever since for its never wavering stand on how we must be people who always affirm life.

Now they are “renewing this call to seize a new moment and a new momentum...to bring about an end to the use of the death penalty in our land.”

They have put out a booklet titled “A Culture of Life, and the

Death Penalty.” Here are their own words on why our nation should forgo the use of the death penalty:

\*The sanction of death, when it is not necessary to protect society, violates respect for human life and dignity.

\*State-sanctioned killing in our names diminishes all of us.

\*Its application is deeply flawed and can be irreversibly wrong, is prone to errors, and is biased by such as race, the quality of legal representation, and where the crime was committed.

\*We have other ways to punish criminals and protect society. It is my hope that not only Catholics, but everyone, will hear what our Catholic Bishops are saying, respect them for their unwavering stand on supporting life, and follow them.

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