

Cindy Siclari, murder victims' family member
Testimony in Support of SB 280

Murder victims' families are regular people. So, even before we experience murder in our lives, many of us already had strong feelings about the death penalty.

For me, there was no question. The death penalty is against my religious principles that all life is sacred. Being "pro-life" from natural conception to natural death is a guiding principle in my life. Given that we can still protect society through lifetime incarceration, I see no possible justification for the taking of a human life – be it an innocent unborn baby, or the most horrendous murderer.

When my sister in law was raped and murdered, in my rage and sadness my beliefs were tested. I am very proud that I stood by my pro-life principles even when it was most difficult. What good are convictions that aren't put to use?

After I lost my sister in law, I was still opposed to the death penalty as a pro-life Catholic. But now, I am also opposed to the death penalty as a murder victim family member. And for me, these are very different things. While I could never support a system that doesn't respect life, I know personally know what a foolish endeavor the death penalty is. When my sister was taken from us, there were many things we needed – answers about the crime, help with the legal system, counseling for our children. So many things would have helped us. But the death penalty wouldn't have, it would have only been a costly distraction.