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Testimony for the Connecticut Judiciary Committee  
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My name is Elizabeth Brancato. Some of you may know me, as I've testified before this committee several times on various forms of this bill, for many years now. By now you probably know that my mother, Barbara McKitis was brutally murdered in her home, in Bantam on May 9, 1979.

I've spoken to you before of some of the ways that having a death penalty in CT hurts victim family members, and how having the death penalty has hurt, not helped me. You have heard from dozens of other victim family members, for years, and they have told you how the death penalty has hurt them and their families.

The numbers of victim family members who support the repeal of the death penalty continue to grow. The number of victim family members who spoke to you through signing a letter to tell you that they want the death penalty repealed in Connecticut has more than doubled since we were here discussing the repeal of the death penalty last year. As politicians, you know that for every constituent who speaks out to you, there are many more, right behind that speaker who feel the same way. Specifically, that is to say, for each one of us from whom you hear, asking you to vote to repeal Connecticut's death penalty, there are many more behind us—silent maybe, but thinking and feeling as we do about this. You know this is true. As elected officials you use the awareness of this fact to guide your actions as representatives of the citizens of Connecticut.

Year after year, you hear testimony that refutes all of the hard-held myths that are used to justify our having a death penalty.

Knowledgeable people tell you that the death penalty is not a deterrent. They prove this with statistics showing that states and countries that have the death penalty have higher murder rates than those who do not have the death penalty.

Knowledgeable people tell you that the costs of imprisoning a murderer for life are far less than the cost of the almost endless appeals that accompany a capital case, and then the cost of an actual execution.

Knowledgeable people tell you that mistakes are made in capital cases. More than 100 people have been exonerated and released from death row since the national moratorium on the death penalty ended in 1976. Some of those exonerated have spoken to you.

Knowledgeable people have told you that the death penalty is against their religious and moral beliefs. You have heard from bishops, nuns, and priests, from ministers, rabbis and mullahs. You have heard from people with no particular religious beliefs who have told you that they believe it is against their personal moral code for the death penalty to exist in Connecticut.

You have heard testimony, year after year that has made it clear that the death penalty is poor

public policy, that is discriminately applied, that it is against the moral beliefs of many of Connecticut's citizens, and that it hurts, rather than helps the families and friends of the murder victims.

This is the third hearing on the repeal of the death penalty at which I've testified. At every hearing, the majority of those whom have testified, from diverse points of view, have asked you to repeal the death penalty. Year after year, more and more people give you more and more reasons to repeal the death penalty. Year after year, more and more people tell you that repealing the death penalty in Connecticut is the right thing to do. They tell you that Connecticut needs to join the rest of the civilized world and abolish the death penalty.

It is my understanding that this event is called a 'hearing' to indicate it is a time for you, our elected representatives in Connecticut government, to hear what we have to say on this most important matter being discussed today. We have spoken, many times. I don't think we were heard. I hope that you will finally hear us today, and pass this bill from the committee, then work to have it passed in the legislature in a form the Governor can sign.

Thank you for your attention to my testimony.