

John Caron, murder victim family member
859 Beaumont Highway
Lebanon, CT 06249
Testimony in Support of SB 280

My name is John Caron and I am a Connecticut horse farmer. Previously, I had my own software development company servicing the life insurance industry. In 1969, I was a Captain in the United States Marine Corp and a pilot of a CH46 helicopter serving in the Republic of Vietnam.

While in Vietnam my duties included flying my aircraft on a variety of missions including medivac and emergency extracts of US personnel. During my time in Vietnam, I flew 512 missions and consequently received twenty five awards of the Flight/Strike Medal. But the reason for this letter has much more to do with my secondary tasks.

In addition to flying, I was required to teach the enlisted personnel in my charge about the Geneva Convention and the concept of "Just War". I was expected to convey the idea of "minimum force" to accomplish the mission. In addition, my charges were expected to accept and implement the idea that the moment they gain control of the "enemy", lethal force, or for that matter, any unnecessary force was unacceptable. This was not always easy for my troops, who could have just witnessed their friends being wounded or killed. Nevertheless, this was what was required and I am proud and relieved to say we managed to rise to that standard.

I was presented with a problem when a young Marine asked me to explain how executing a prisoner back home was different from executing a prisoner in the field. If I applied the "minimum force" doctrine that I was expected to teach, I could not make a distinction. The question is "is the situation under control?" and if the answer is "Yes" then lethal force is not an option. There is no question that the situation IS under control when the prisoner is incarcerated.

This realization is sickening. It leaves me with the same feeling I had about the My Lai massacre. All of the true military professionals were appalled by the failure of character of this event. Unfortunately, I get to relive the My Lai failure every time the state accepts the "emotional" need to execute a prisoner. It is my hope that The State of Connecticut will hold itself to the same standard that we expect of our young military personnel and of our police.

When I have explained my position I have often gotten the response that "I would feel differently if it was my family". This is not the case! My Aunt Dorothy was brutally murdered while she was in a store, by a young man was looking for money to feed his cocaine addiction. In addition, my spouse of 39 years lost her Uncle Clint to murder. He was killed during a home invasion and extortion attempt. The perpetrators were apprehended and sentenced to life without parole. In both cases the process was measured in months, not decades. We were and are relieved by this outcome and feel that justice has been done. Furthermore, the perpetrators will have ample time to consider their actions.

I ask you to support SB 280.