



HARTFORD POLICE UNION

20-28 Sargeant Street Hartford, CT 06105

Tel. 860-548-1435 Fax 860-548-1329 E-mail: hartford.union@att.net

PRESIDENT RICHARD HOLTON

Office of The President

Statement of

THE HARTFORD POLICE UNION

To the

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

CO-Chairman, Senator Coleman and CO-Chairman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Richard Holton, a Sergeant in the Hartford Police Department with 16 years of policing experience. I am also the President of the Hartford Police Union, the largest independent municipal police union in the state. On behalf of all the members of the Hartford Police Union, which is comprised of Patrolmen, Detectives, Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains, we are opposed to *Senate Bill #280 An Act Revising the Penalty for Capital Felonies.*

Over time we have evolved into a civilized society that has become governed by laws and morality, and throughout history we have learned that when an individual violates those laws there are consequences, and that those consequences must fit the crime. When individuals believe that society is unwilling to impose upon criminals the punishment they deserve then they have sown the seeds of anarchy and chaos which results in individuals seeking justice by other means.

When an individual murders another individual, society must stand up and denounce this act, and if that act was so heinous that it warrants death then that individual chose their fate by their actions. The death penalty is not about "an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth" it's about holding that individual accountable for their actions and protecting /safeguarding innocent victims (men, women, children and the elderly) from predators within society who do not have a moral compass and do not value life as the rest of society does.

Is it so much to ask these violent predators to forfeit their life when they didn't give their victim(s) a choice, I say no. It's not until some of these predators are faced with their own mortality that they fear (the same sentence they gave their innocent victims) DEATH themselves. My members and I, along with two thirds of the American public are in favor of the death penalty.

Death penalty opponents argue two points, the economics of the death penalty and the deterrent effect of the death penalty.

As a deterrent the death penalty does work. Several recent studies from Emory University, The University of Colorado, The University of Houston and Clemson University show that it does. An economics professor from the University of Colorado, Professor Naci Mocan, who is opposed to the death penalty, stated that his research



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shows that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides.¹ A nationwide study done by professors at Emory University concluded that each execution deters an average of 18 murders.²

The economics of death penalty, opponents say it's cheaper to give these most violent and sadistic members of society life in prison. They talk about the trial and the extensive appeals process and how costly they both are but it's these very individuals that make a profit from the system itself. They say the appeals process is too lengthy and costly. *Then let's streamline the process.* It's these very same individuals that cause these delays by appealing every little decision made by the court costing the tax payers money and delaying justice for the victim's families. There is a cost to seeking justice and to say that cost is too expensive, especially in these types of cases is absurd.

There is no threat of a swift and speedy trial these days, it's just delays and more delays, and the process has to be streamlined. By streamlining the process it would strengthen the deterrent effect of the death penalty. The longer an individual sits on death row the less effect it has as a deterrent. According to a 2004 study done by a professor from Emory University, for every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented.³ That's one innocent victim's life, which would be spared.

That innocent victim could be a member of your family, and instead of celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and other special occasions with them you could be marking these special occasions by placing flowers at a somber graveside remembrance.

Life in prison is not a deterrent, the death penalty is.

The Greek philosopher ARISTOTLE said:

"We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions" what is more just and brave than advocating for the innocent victims that did not have a choice and no longer have a voice.

Sergeant Rich Holton
Hartford Police Union President

¹ The Deterrent Effect of the Death Penalty (2003), *carmical.net electronic reference*. Retrieved April 11, 2011 from <http://www.carmical.net/resources/deteff.htm> by Dudley Sharp

² The Deterrent Effect of the Death Penalty (2003), *carmical.net electronic reference*. Retrieved April 11, 2011 from <http://www.carmical.net/resources/deteff.htm> by Dudley Sharp

³ Death Penalty Deters Murders,(2007) *cbsnews.com electronic reference*, Retrieved April 5,2011 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/06/11/national/main2911428.shtml> by Sean Alfano