

Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 101

Written Testimony Only

David M. Hulefeld

November 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is David Hulefeld and I am a resident of Hamilton County. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 101.

I strongly support passage of this legislation. For many years I have opposed the death penalty, convinced by the moral arguments of church leaders on this topic. I firmly believe that life is sacred; society does not have the right to “play God” and deprive individuals the chance to experience interior conversion. The patent inequity of the application of this sentence, and the numerous erroneous convictions have reinforced my belief.

However my belief system did not prepare me for the experience of coming to know a death row convict personally.

Several years ago I was asked to correspond with a man on death row. I have come to know this person well. The product of an abusive household, low income parents, limited educational opportunity, he lacked the financial resources for adequate legal representation in his trial. The court-designated attorney devoted very little effort to his defense; the prosecutor may well have abused his authority. I have come to believe that this person was unjustly convicted. The prospect of his execution, with the loss of any chance of proving his innocence, haunts me.

We can do better than this. Many states rely on life imprisonment to safeguard the public. Ohio should join them.

I thank you sincerely for considering my thoughts.