



Chairman Eklund, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony today on Senate Bill 256.

My name is Latrisha Barnett. I am from Bauxite, Arkansas. I am a member of the National Organization of Victims of Juvenile Murderers (NOVJM). On June 2, 1992, my beloved twelve-year-old sister was violently stolen from this world and our family. My mother, Hazel Richardson, had taken my sister, Robin Richardson, with her to work that night. She was preparing to close when two young men came into the store. One was 17-year-old Chad Kitchell and the other was 18-year-old Steven Waggoner.

Kitchell came in with a large hunting knife and Waggoner with a sawed-off shotgun. They both had covering over their faces. They took the money left in the till and forced both my mother and sister face down on the floor. Kitchell stabbed my sister in the back. Waggoner shot her in the head and hand. Waggoner also shot my mother in the neck. The robbers both ran out of the store and left them both for dead.

My father, who arrived at the store a short time later, walked in to see the gruesome scene. My sister, who was already dead, laid in a pool of blood and was making horrible sounds. Her little hand lay in a bloody chunk as Waggoner had pretty much severed it with the blast. My mother had a gaping wound in her neck which was bleeding profusely and was missing her ear. On the way to the hospital, she had a stroke due to blood loss and her heart stopped twice.

I was only 14 at the time of my sister's murder. We were both getting ready for summer break. We only had one more day of school left. Robin was about to turn 13. She was so excited. Mom and Dad were going to let her have a birthday party, which was why she went with mom to the store. They were planning it. I was at home studying for my last math test. I looked out the window and saw my dad coming to the house. When he walked in I knew something was wrong. He sat down in the chair and I knelt on the floor. He repeatedly rubbed my hands saying my name over and over again. He then broke the news. I was devastated. I have never in my life felt such drowning in overwhelming grief and pain. On the way to the hospital, my dad held me while I cried. I noticed his hands and sleeves were covered in blood. This was a nightmare come true and this was just day one.

I spent hours in a private waiting room with crushing fear that my mother wasn't going to make it through the night. My best friend was gone. I had to bear all this alone. When they finally allowed us to come into the room I nearly passed out. My mother had so many tubes in her. She was hooked up to so many different machines. Her beautiful hair had been shaved off on the side of the wound. She had huge white bandages around her neck and over her ear. I remember seeing the blood staining the bandage. She was so white and looked so frail. The next two days she started waking up some. Every time she did she would mouth, "where is Robin?" Due to the

strokes, she had lost her short term memory. My dad had to tell her over and over again that Robin was gone.

After the initial night in the hospital, I started having nightmares and night terrors! I was scared of my own shadow. I had to sleep with a night light on every night. I couldn't walk into a gas station without panic overcoming me. Our lives were forever changed and altered by these two young men. They caused irrefutable damage. I suffer from PTSD, depression, agoraphobia, anxiety, and panic attacks. I have to take medications to cope. I see a counselor and psychologist. I am and forever will be impacted by what these young men chose to do that night.

Thankfully, the court case went quickly. Both killers plead guilty to capital murder and attempted murder. They both were sentenced to life without parole. While I knew my sister would never come back, I was secure in knowing that they would be in prison for the rest of their lives. We could have at least some kind of peace in our lives. We still had/have to live with the damage they have caused. There will always be an empty spot where Robin should have been. Yet here we are being forced to relive this traumatic night over again. We have heard about "their "rights" and "their" mental needs. These two young men testified in court that they were taught right from wrong and that they knew it was wrong to kill someone. This was not a moment of passion, it was premeditated. They stalked out the store days before. They had a plan beforehand and intended on killing everyone in the store. They purchased and modified a firearm. They attended a party after they killed Robin. They said it was a rush and exciting.

What the murderers did was not a childlike behavior. It was not a child-like decision. It was an evil, inhuman, and cruel act. We have already had our resentencing hearing. It was horrific and traumatizing. It intensified all our issues we were coping with and caused severe mental health

problems. They took my beloved sister. Kitchell is now harming us even more. We have once again been robbed.

Thank you for your attention. I urge you to vote "NO" on the bill.

Robin's memorial on the NOVJM website. <http://www.teenkillers.org/index.php/memorials/arkansas-victims/robin-richardson/>