

House Finance Committee/Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Bill 259
Written Testimony Only

Carol Rafferty
10/09/23

Dear Chairman Edward, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Carol Rafferty and I am a resident of Franklin County, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent written testimony on House Bill 259.

The repeal of the death penalty has been important to me for many decades. You have the chance to step forward and put Ohio on the right side of history. It is time to acknowledge that we are endorsing a barbaric practice that most of the industrialized world has outlawed as a human rights' violation. I believe that the repeal of capital punishment is the litmus test of a civilized society. By outlawing the death penalty, we will make a statement that we have risen above the impulse of vengeance in order to assert that all human life is sacred.

There are many other reasons why this practice should be abolished. Mistakes are made. Eleven people from Ohio's death row have been exonerated since 1976. The death penalty is not a deterrent to crime, it is expensive, and it will never be administered fairly because of racial bias, income disparity, and the differing views of prosecuting attorneys. This leaves revenge as the only reason left for state-sponsored killing. We must not confuse justice with vengeance. The state was not intended to be an instrument of revenge.

The tide is turning. Death sentences and executions have been declining nationally and in Ohio for two decades. Repealing the death penalty is a bipartisan and a pro-life issue. A life sentence without parole will provide justice and protect our communities.

I am asking you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this critically important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.