

Senate Judiciary Committee/Proponent Testimony  
Ohio Senate Bill 101  
Written Testimony Only

Carol Rafferty  
11/14/23

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary 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 Senate Bill 101.

The repeal of the death penalty has been important to me for many decades. I am dismayed that it is still acceptable in Ohio. 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. We are in the company of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and Iraq as the top executioners worldwide in 2022.

I believe that the repeal of capital punishment is the litmus test of a civilized society. Chief Justice Earl Warren explained that the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause in the Eighth Amendment should "draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing 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.

We expect our leaders to rely on reason rather than emotion when dealing with matters of criminal justice. It is easy to confuse justice with vengeance. The state was not intended to be an instrument of revenge. When a government condones executions, it is normalizing the barbarism involved.

The tide is turning. Death sentences and executions have been declining nationally and in Ohio for two decades. As of today, 24 states plus Washington, D.C. have abolished the death penalty. Let's get on the right side of history. 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 submit testimony.

Carol Rafferty