

Open Letter to the Citizens of New Hampshire

May 3, 2019



Dear Fellow Granite Staters,

Today, Gov. Sununu vetoed HB 455 repealing the death penalty at the Officer Michael Briggs MPAL building. As the immediate past president of the NH Police Association, you have heard my personal and professional pleas to keep NH's death penalty in statute. As a police officer of more than 16 years, I can say without hyperbole that I have never seen the frequency and magnitude of violence in our State that we currently experience.

In March of this year, officers from the Manchester Police Department were attacked while conducting a clandestine drug investigation on South Willow Street at an area hotel (WMUR, March 28, 2019 Kristin Carosa reporting). Officers from Manchester Police, State Police, Nashua Police, and special agents with the DEA came under repeated gun fire throughout the night. Thankfully, no police officers, fire fighters, EMTs, or innocent civilians were injured in this shoot out. This is but one recent example of the violence directed towards NH's police officers. And, we live in one of the safest states in America.

The death penalty is also important to protect our State's corrections officers, who monitor and supervise prisoners serving life sentences. Without the possibility of death, an inmate could take the life of a corrections officer without the real fear of penalty. This has occurred in other states and would also occur in New Hampshire.

And, while some argue that the death penalty's repeal in N.H. would not affect convicted "cop killer" Michael Addison's death penalty sentence, the truth of the matter is that NO state has executed someone on death row after its death penalty repeal. Chuck Douglas, former Chief Justice of the NH Supreme Court, prosecutor and legal counsel to Gov. Warren Rudman in 1974, helped revise the death penalty and recently called for hate crimes to be added to our State's death penalty, not have it repealed (Concord Monitor, April 5, 2018).

We stand with Governor Sununu, Senators Birdsell, Bradley, Carson, Cavanaugh, Gray, Morse, and all members of the NH House of Representative who voted in opposition to the repeal of the death penalty in New Hampshire. We ask that you do the same.

Patrick Cheetham
Past President, NH Police Association
2018-2019 NHPA Legislative Co-chair

New Hampshire Police Association
814 Elm Street Suite 512
Manchester, NH 03101
"NH's Voice of Law Enforcement"
www.nhpolice.net