



Rep. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda
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District 9

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Representative Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda Files Death Penalty Repealer Bill

Tallahassee – Amid growing concerns over better and more cost effective ways to prevent and fight crime especially against children and in our schools, State Representative Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda (D-Tallahassee) has filed House Bill 4005, which would end the death penalty in Florida.

The recent tragedies of Sandy Hook and Webster, NY have resulted in an urgent cry for improved methods and additional resources to prevent such heinous crimes. For neither of the perpetrators of these horrible murders would the death penalty have been an effective deterrent as both predators killed themselves. The Florida Legislature will be working to find more effective ways to use all our resources to prevent similar crimes. In fact, Florida schools are asking for two hundred million dollars to provide armed resource officers at every school.

"The appropriate question for state government is how do we keep people safe from crime in the most cost effective way? When you analyze the numbers, state sponsored execution is not the correct answer," says Rep. Rehwinkel Vasilinda.

Executions are carried out at staggering cost to taxpayers. In its 2000 report, "The High Price of Killing Killers," the Palm Beach Post found that Florida spent approximately \$51 million each year to enforce the death penalty. Other states and nations have done similar studies. With the money saved by passing HB 4005, Florida could add 450 highly trained and well-equipped law enforcement officers and significantly upgrade the FDLE investigative tools, including utilizing cutting-edge technology to apprehend criminals and prevent further crime. **"We could take this money and invest it in law enforcement. In the end, Floridians would see a much greater benefit from having hundreds more police officers and detectives on the street, armed with the very best equipment,"** said Rehwinkel Vasilinda.

Life without parole is a sensible alternative to the death penalty. Almost every state in the country now has life in prison without parole. Unlike decades ago, a sentence of life without parole means exactly what it says – convicts locked away in prison until they die. It is much less expensive to keep a criminal in prison for life without parole than it is for the state to execute them. Most significantly, there has never been a conclusive study that has found that the death penalty is an effective deterrent to murder.

"For many Floridians across the state there are additional and important reasons for repealing the death penalty. The one reason that transcends to all Floridians and is the appropriate purview of legislation is the question of how to keep our citizens truly safe while using taxpayer money in the most effective way to keep them from becoming the victims of crime. Even if some Floridians and legislative colleagues believe that justice is vengeance and vengeance is the proper role of government, we simply do not have the resources to afford that "luxury". We must be about the business of effective smart crime fighting, preventing horrendous tragedies like that of Sandy Hook and Webster, not political posturing or simple vengeance."
Said Rep. Rehwinkel Vasilinda.

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