

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 37/00 (AMR 51/59/00, 14 April 2000) and follow-up (AMR 51/76/00, 18 May 2000) - Death penalty

**USA (New Hampshire) Bill to abolish the death penalty**

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On 19 May 2000, the Governor of New Hampshire vetoed the bill, passed by the Senate and House of Representatives, to abolish the death penalty.

In her statement vetoing the bill, Governor Shaheen said "I believe that there are some murders that are so brutal and heinous that the death penalty is the only appropriate penalty." She continued: "Some who oppose the death penalty argue we cannot trust our criminal justice system and cite examples, all from other states, where those charged with capital murder did not receive adequate defenses or otherwise did not receive a fair trial. This is not true of New Hampshire. New Hampshire has an excellent public defender program and our criminal defense bar is among the best in the country. I have the highest confidence in New Hampshire's criminal justice system and so should every New Hampshire citizen."

Governor Shaheen concluded: "I have listened to the arguments of supporters of this bill. I have read the thoughtful correspondence and materials I have received from both supporters and opponents of this bill, and I have considered the arguments on both sides of this issue with great care. I am respectful of the very sincerely held beliefs of those who oppose the death penalty. But it falls within my duty as governor to act on this legislation based on what I believe is in the best interests of the people of this state, and to the best of my ability, I have done so. I believe our capital murder statute should remain the law in New Hampshire."

Among those who had urged Governor Shaheen to support abolition were former US President Jimmy Carter and Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Archbishop Tutu appealed to the Governor to "Choose peace over violence, forgiveness over vengeance, and love over hate."

Although Governor Shaheen's veto could be overridden by a two-thirds vote in the House of Representatives and Senate, it is unclear if sufficient votes could be generated for such a move and whether they will be sought at this stage.

**Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action by the UA Network is requested.**