

**PUBLIC**

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**Further information on UA 157/04 (AMR 51/067/2004, 27 April 2004) - Death penalty / Legal concern**

**USA (New Hampshire)**

**Governor vetoes juvenile death penalty bill**

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On 10 May, Governor Craig Benson vetoed the bill, passed by both houses of the New Hampshire legislature, to raise from 17 to 18 the minimum age at which a person can be eligible for the death penalty in the state.

A fundamental and unequivocal principle of international law prohibits the use of the death penalty against child offenders – anyone who was under 18 at the time of the crime.

Governor Benson played politics with the death penalty, by announcing his veto surrounded by police officers who had just attended Law Enforcement Memorial Day (a state occasion to commemorate officers who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty). The governor said that “It seems to me when somebody – regardless of their age – is bold enough to take the life of a police officer, there should be no exceptions, we should make sure they pay the ultimate price.”

Efforts will be made to achieve a veto override in the legislature. Two-thirds of each house of the legislature must vote for such an override. It would seem that there would be enough votes in the House of Representatives, which passed the bill on 22 April by 272 votes to 72. However, the Senate vote was less overwhelming, with the bill passing by a narrow margin of 12 votes to 11. The result of efforts to achieve an override will not be known for about a month.

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