

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.148

Reps. LaGrand, Hammoud, Tyrone Carter, Hoadley, Camilleri, Anthony, Cynthia Johnson, Garza, Peterson, Brenda Carter, Kennedy, Coleman, Tate, Elder, Haadsma, Hertel, Sneller, Wittenberg, Koleszar, Manoogian, Rabhi, Pohutsky, Warren, Lasinski, Sowerby, Hood, Bolden, Pagan, Ellison, Garrett, Neeley, Gay-Dagnogo, Yancey, Kuppa and Jones offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to oppose the resumption of capital punishment by
2 the federal government and urge Attorney General Barr and the U.S.
3 Department of Justice to immediately reverse its decision to resume
4 executions.

5 Whereas, The federal government has only carried out three
6 death sentences since capital punishment was reinstated in 1988,
7 the most recent of which took place in 2003. Federal executions
8 have not taken place in recent years, in part, because of



1 difficulty obtaining sodium thiopental, one of three drugs used in
2 federal executions; and

3 Whereas, The federal government will be resuming capital
4 punishment, scheduling five executions beginning in December 2019.
5 On July 25, 2019, Attorney General William Barr directed the
6 Federal Bureau of Prisons to adopt a proposed Addendum to the
7 Federal Execution Protocol, replacing the three-drug procedure
8 previously used in federal executions with a single drug,
9 pentobarbital; and

10 Whereas, The death penalty is cruel and barbaric and has no
11 place in modern society. The federal government should not be
12 taking steps to reinstate this unwise, unequal, and unjust
13 practice; and

14 Whereas, The death penalty has never been convincingly shown
15 to deter people from committing serious crimes. States without the
16 death penalty have experienced similar falling rates of violent
17 crime as states with the death penalty in recent decades, and
18 states have abolished the death penalty without seeing a rise in
19 violent crime; and

20 Whereas, Capital punishment is more expensive than alternative
21 sentences such as life in prison. Trials take longer and are more
22 expensive when the death penalty is at issue; the appeals process
23 is lengthier; and there are significant costs associated with
24 security and prisoner housing for death penalty cases that are not
25 present in non-death penalty cases. Numerous states have found the
26 true cost of an execution to be higher than that of a life
27 sentence; and

28 Whereas, The death penalty is applied in a fundamentally
29 unequal way. An enormous body of research shows that racial,



1 ethnic, and religious minorities are more likely to receive death
2 sentences, as are the poor and people with developmental
3 disabilities and mental illness; and

4 Whereas, The permanence of capital punishment robs people of
5 the ability to prove their innocence. Executions of wrongfully
6 convicted individuals cannot be undone even upon the discovery of
7 new evidence and scientific methodologies or when better analysis
8 comes to light. The growing number of exonerations nationwide
9 suggests at least some portion of the people who could be executed
10 at the federal level are innocent; and

11 Whereas, Many Michiganders and Americans follow faith
12 traditions which clearly reject the use of the death penalty in
13 concept or in practice because it violates important doctrines
14 related to fairness, mercy, and the value of human life; and

15 Whereas, Moral opposition to capital punishment is part of
16 Michigan's identity, having been the first English-speaking
17 jurisdiction in the world to pass legislation against the death
18 penalty in 1846. The state has long recognized that a society that
19 sanctions executions diminishes the value of life, particularly
20 when other means of punishment are as effective, less costly, and
21 fairer. This moral clarity is best articulated by Sojourner Truth,
22 speaking in opposition to a proposal to reinstate the death
23 penalty:

24 It shocked me worse than slavery. I've heard that you are
25 going to have hanging again in this state...Where is the
26 man or woman who can sanction such a thing as that? We are
27 the makers of murderers if we do it.

28 ; and

29 Whereas, The framers of Michigan's 1963 constitution felt so

1 strongly in their opposition to capital punishment that they
2 enshrined it in Article IV, Section 46 of the state constitution,
3 providing that "No law shall be enacted providing for the penalty
4 of death."; now, therefore, be it

5 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we oppose the
6 resumption of capital punishment by the federal government and urge
7 Attorney General Barr and the U.S. Department of Justice to
8 immediately reverse its decision to resume executions; and be it
9 further

10 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
11 President of the United States, the Attorney General of the United
12 States, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.