



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

June 20, 2019

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I wish to provide a vote explanation for my “no” vote on Senate Bill 1013.

I do not support the use of the death penalty in Oregon’s justice system for a number of reasons. From ethical considerations, to the real lack of justice provided to the families of victims who go through the process, to its ineffectiveness as a deterrent, to the cost, to even potentially executing innocent people—I simply feel justice is better served by life incarceration, where offenders cannot recommit crimes and cause additional pain to others.

My “no” vote on this issue rests primarily on a few key points. Firstly, the death penalty—even though it is currently not in use because of a moratorium on the death penalty imposed by the Governor—is still in place. This particular bill only narrows the application of the death penalty by modifying the definition of aggravated murder. I would prefer to see the death penalty repealed entirely.

Secondly, if the death penalty is going to remain in place, and if aggravated murder is the charge used to apply it, I believe it should include other heinous crimes. Most notably for me, the crime of murdering someone as a result of maiming or torture was removed from the definition.

I do not support the death penalty, and wish to make that abundantly clear. That said, I truly believe that Oregon should fully abolish the practice, rather than tip-toe around it in a technical fix that artificially narrows the definition. I hope that the issue of the practice is one that appears some day on the ballot—and that Oregon voters move to end the practice. In the end, however, I appreciate that the passage of this bill opens the door for Oregon to see the additional benefits of seeing fewer people being charged with crimes that warrant the exploration of the highest punishment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tiffany Mitchell".

Representative Mitchell

