

**Statement of Lisa Miller Delity  
Annapolis; August 19, 2008**

Thank you for allowing me to speak before you today.

My name is Lisa Miller Delity. I am a resident of Bowie, and a lifelong resident of the great state of Maryland. I am also very proud to say that yesterday I started my 31<sup>st</sup> year as a public school teacher in Prince George's County. I teach at Benjamin Tasker Middle School in Bowie.

Two days before Thanksgiving Day, 1994, my brother, Michael John Miller, an FBI Special Agent, and two of his colleagues were murdered in the line of duty. You may remember that tragic event at the Metropolitan Police Headquarters in Washington, D.C. A man carrying a concealed assault pistol opened the door to the room and opened fire, leaving 3 dead and one critically wounded.

I will never forget the events of that horrible day. Nor will I ever forget or get beyond the emotional devastation Mike's death caused and continues to cause my family. I wish I could tell you that survivors' memories of such shocking events fade. Sadly, the grief and shock never goes away.

Since that time and in my brother's honor, I have worked to expose the dangers of gun violence and to gain measures to take illegal guns out of the hands of people, like Mike's murderer, who shouldn't have had access to guns. I am pleased to say that I am joined in this work by members of my family. And, in this room today I am joined by other members of my family.

I am also joined today by other murder victim's family members who, like us, oppose the death penalty. I ask them now to come forward and stand behind me as I read a letter signed by 49 Marylanders who have endured the loss of a family member to murder and who support repeal of our state's capital punishment law.

August 19, 2008

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

We are family members and loved ones of murder victims. We desperately miss the parents, children, siblings, and spouses we have lost. We live with the pain and heartbreak of their absence every day and would do anything to have them back. We have been touched by the criminal justice system in ways we never imagined and would never wish on anyone. Our experience compels us to speak out for change.

We are writing today to ask your support in passing legislation that would replace Maryland's death penalty with life without parole. Though we share different perspectives on the death penalty, every one of us agrees that Maryland's capital punishment system doesn't work for victims' families, and that our state is better off without it.

To be meaningful, justice should be swift and sure. Life without parole, which begins immediately, is both of these; the death penalty is neither. Capital punishment drags victims' loved ones through an agonizing and lengthy process, holding out the promise of one punishment in the beginning and often resulting in a life sentence in the end anyway. A life without parole sentence for killers right from the start would keep society safe, hold killers responsible for their brutal and depraved acts, and would start as soon as we left the courtroom instead of leaving us in limbo.

At the same time, a system of life without parole in place of the death penalty would save scarce funds. As Maryland taxpayers, we have spent millions of dollars and diverted endless hours of court and law enforcement time since capital punishment was reinstated in Maryland. What has it bought us? Years worth of appeals and overturned sentences that have clogged our courts and a system so broken that fixing it is probably impossible - all for what? Five executions that took decades to achieve.

Those resources could be spent in better ways if death-eligible killers were sentenced to life without parole. Maryland could put more police on our streets and provide them with the very best equipment available. Law enforcement programs that work might have prevented the tragedies we suffered at only a fraction of the cost. A legal system that wasn't so bogged down by five men on death row could prosecute and sentence countless other non-death crimes and take dangerous people off the streets before they commit murder. Dollars saved could mean more counseling and aid to children orphaned by these horrible murders, or other services we so desperately need as we attempt to get on with our lives.

Only a handful of arbitrarily selected murderers are sentenced to death. Is it worth the price?

It is vitally important that our state address the needs of surviving family and friends as we struggle to heal. We know that elected officials who promote the death penalty often do so with the best intentions of helping family members like us. We are writing to say that there are better ways to help us. The death penalty is a broken and costly system. Maryland doesn't need it, and victims' families like ours don't want it.

Please vote for repeal of the death penalty.

Kimberly Armstrong-Hughes  
Baltimore  
*lost son, Eric R. Villines*

Barbara Arnwine  
Upper Marlboro  
*lost brother, Alan Glenn Arnwine*

Ginger Beale  
Baltimore  
*lost son, Harold Robinson, Jr.*

Alice Chambers  
Annapolis  
*lost her mother*

Sherrie Choporis  
*lost brother-in-law, James Choporis*

Carmel Crilley  
Huntingtown  
*lost husband, Christopher Crilley*

Mariah Crilley  
Huntingtown  
*lost father, Christopher Crilley*

Marie Ellen Cushing  
Baltimore  
*lost grandfather, Robert Cushing, Sr.*

Denise deGuzman  
Germantown  
*lost brother, Jerome Hoy*

Lisa Delity  
Bowie  
*lost brother, FBI Special Agent Michael Miller*

Kathleen W. Farley  
Bowie  
*lost brother, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Tiffany G. Farley  
*lost uncle, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Sarah A. Gardner  
Hyattsville  
*lost sister, Nancy B. Gardner*

Evelyn V. Gaston  
Rockville  
*lost son, Michael L. Boyd, Sr.*

Audrey Hall

Baltimore  
*lost grandmother, LaTisha Turner*

Charles Hall  
Baltimore  
*lost niece, LaTisha Turner*

Madeline L. Harrington  
Baltimore  
*lost mother, Emma Louise Coxson*

Jean-Marie Johnson  
Brookeville  
*lost uncle, Michael L. Boyd, Sr.*

David W. McGee  
*lost uncle, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Maura McGee  
Bowie  
*lost uncle, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Sally Ransom Knecht  
Lutherville  
*lost husband, Rev. Dr. Lewis F. Ransom*

Marian McSherry  
Frederick  
*lost husband, William Clinton McSherry*

Dale Miller  
Dunkirk  
*lost father, FBI Special Agent Michael Miller*

Mickey Miller  
Dunkirk  
*lost father, FBI Special Agent Michael Miller*

Wanda Miller  
Dunkirk  
*lost husband, FBI Special Agent Michael Miller*

James O'Brien  
St. Michaels  
*lost daughter, Dierdre O'Brien*

Margery Patten

Owings

*lost son, Michael Patten*

Sylvester J. Schieber

New Market

*lost daughter, Shannon Schieber*

Vicki Schieber

New Market

*lost daughter, Shannon Schieber*

Sean J. Schieber

Silver Spring

*lost sister, Shannon Schieber*

Norbert Schieber

New Market

*lost niece, Shannon Schieber*

Karen Schneider

Bethesda

*lost father, Seymour Schneider*

Jeanne K. Snyder

Sandy Spring

*lost daughter, Barbara Snyder*

Brenda JB Soder

Silver Spring

*lost great uncle, Richard Bowser*

Bonnita Spikes

Upper Marlboro

*lost husband, Michael Spikes*

Lisa A. Taylor

New Market

*lost brother, Michael Boyd, Sr.*

Helen Thomas Keith

Baltimore

*lost grandfather, John Thomas, Sr.*

Sharon Thompson

Middle River

*lost her brother and nephew*

Susan W. Tripodi  
*lost brother, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Antoinette Turner  
Baltimore  
*lost step-daughter, Latisha Turner*

Daniel Wells  
*lost brother, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Mary Wells Shea  
*lost brother, Msgr. Thomas Wells*

Ricardo R. Wiggs  
Clinton  
*lost wife, Sharon Wiggs*

Christopher Wilson  
Frederick  
*lost father, Owen D. Wilson*

Mary G. Wilson  
Frederick  
*lost father-in-law, Owen D. Wilson*

Adrienne Witherspoon  
Baltimore  
*lost common law husband and father to her children, Irvin B. "Nephew" Lawson*

Emma Worrell  
Baltimore  
*lost son, Charles*

George Worrell  
Baltimore  
*lost brother, Charles*

Rhonda Nicole Yakoub  
New Carrollton  
*lost son, Idris Yahoub*