



Issue: Death Penalty

Speed Date... To Legislate

Bill: No 2019 legislation proposed yet

What it does:

While there is no legislation planned in 2019, last year's H.B. 379 would have prohibited the state of Utah from seeking the death penalty for aggravated murder. H.B. 379 passed the House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee on 7-4 vote but failed to advance any further.

Why it matters:

Utah's death penalty does not work on multiple levels. Instead, the death penalty is an inefficient, expensive government program that is rarely and arbitrarily applied, resulting in decades of additional litigation. The more people learn how the death penalty is actually administered in Utah, the more they oppose it—including former state and federal prosecutors.

- 1) The death penalty in Utah is rarely pursued and secured. Over the past twenty years, Utah has approved only two death sentences and carried out only two executions.
- 2) Sentencing someone to death costs much more than life imprisonment. A recent study conducted by the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice confirmed that state and local expenses for capital (i.e. death penalty) cases cost \$40 million for the attainment of only two death sentences. That's \$20 million per death sentence.
- 3) Utah cannot fix the broken death penalty system. Since Utah legislators cannot change the federal appeals process, there is little that they can do to expedite executions or reduce costs.
- 4) Over 160 individuals have been wrongfully sentenced to death in the U.S. In Utah, Bruce Dallas Goodman served 20 years in prison for murder before DNA evidence proved that he could not have been the individual who committed the crime.

Key Question:

Should Utah end use of the death penalty in the last decade?

Instructions: As a group, spend the next five minutes crafting a pitch to lobby your expert to pass this bill.