

ADAM PAUL LAXALT
Attorney General



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March 31, 2017

via Hand Delivery

The Honorable Steve Yeager, Chair
Assembly Committee on Judiciary
Nevada Assembly
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4747

Re: AB 237

Dear Mr. Yeager:

The Office of the Attorney General strongly opposes AB 237, which proposes to abolish capital punishment. It is fundamental to our concept of justice in Nevada that for the worst, most violent acts of murder, juries should consider whether death is an appropriate punishment. The death penalty is not imposed lightly, and is only possible in a narrow context when the jury finds that specific aggravating circumstances outweigh any mitigating circumstances. Circumstances in which at least one life has been violently taken, leaving other lives shattered as a result.

The U.S. Supreme Court has made it clear - through its extensive rulings setting constitutional parameters for imposition of the death penalty - that the people, not the courts, should decide whether the penalty is appropriate. And time and time again the public has consistently reaffirmed its support for the death penalty. Nevadans across the political spectrum most recently demonstrated their overwhelming support in a Nevada Independent Poll conducted in January, with 66% supporting capital punishment, including 79% of Republicans polled, 55% of Democrats, and 63% of Independent voters.

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Nevadans have spoken. Your constituents have spoken. And a large majority of Nevadans believe that the death penalty should be a possible consequence for the most violent acts of murder. If you disregard the will of the large majority of Nevadans, you risk undermining their faith in the justice system.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

ADAM PAUL LAXALT
Attorney General

By:  _____

Brett Kandt
Chief Deputy Attorney General

WBK/klr

cc: Assembly Committee on Judiciary