

## What is the value of a person's life?

If I were to ask you what your life is worth most people would say it's not for sale or that you can not place a value on life. Unfortunately, some of our representatives in the Vermont State Legislature believe you can place a value on one's life.

There are a couple of pending bills that have been introduced that will essentially eliminate the life without parole for murderers making them eligible after serving 25 years or less.

Vermont repealed the death penalty back in 1972. The last person executed in Vermont was Donald Demag in 1954. He was electrocuted for a double murder and robbery that he committed after a prison escape. Absent a death penalty it is reasonable to assume that some individuals deserving of the death penalty have been sentenced to life without parole.

Back to the value of one's life. Once your dead life is over so it can not have any value to you, however its value to your family, friends and society will be affected forever. They will miss out on your presence at every moment of the rest of their lives. In that regard its impossible to place a value on the persons nonexistence.

What makes Vermont lawmakers more concerned about the future of a convicted murderer than that of the deceased victim and their family? Why would Senator Sears, and Representatives Cina and Rachelson introduce such bills?

We wonder why society today has so much violence. We've allowed the so-called experts their time for their social experiment in rehabilitative measures over the last 40 years and are living with the results. Criminals have no fear of the consequences of their actions and why should they. Many are a product of our societies attitude to make excuses or blame someone else for their actions. We keep hearing that Vermont wants to reduce its prison population. At what expense?

In crafting this bill S.261 its' creators were careful not to stir up controversy by adding that it's passage would not affect any previous case sentences. Really? This is clearly a sneaky passage of wording that amounts to BS. If this were to become law every murderer in Vermont custody would be filing an appeal of their sentence and justifiably so, furthermore the same people introducing this would probably be introducing a bill next term to allow it.

What Senator Sears, Representatives Cina and Rachelson have done here is to let us know that you can place a value on a person's life, that its worth a maximum of 25 years of the persons who took your loved one away. During the time that the murderer is incarcerated they will be able to get visits, phone calls, gifts and a college education. Who knows they may even end up becoming a teacher. In the meantime, the victim's family can reflect on their memories and visit their loved one at the cemetery.

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