

Terry Lenamon on the Death Penalty

Sidebar with a Board Certified Expert Criminal Trial Attorney



Terence M. Lenamon is a Florida Bar certified expert in the area of criminal trial law. With over 17 years experience he has built a reputation as one of Florida's most respected criminal defense lawyers. His defense has been sought by many high-profile clients and has led him through 20 first-degree murder trials and eight death penalty cases. That experience has brought him national recognition as a go-to commentator on death penalty issues. He is the force behind both deathpenaltyblog.com and Florida Capital Resource Center (floridacapitalresourcecenter.org), and can be reached at terry@lenamonlaw.com.

Will Governor Pat Quinn End Capital Punishment in Illinois? We'll Soon Know.

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On Tuesday, the Illinois State Senate sent a bill to the governor's desk which will abolish the death penalty in that state ... if Governor Pat Quinn will sign it.

Problem is, **Governor Pat Quinn** supports capital punishment. The next day, instead of signing the bill into law, Governor Quinn reported that he would listen to every argument – as well as his own conscience – before deciding what to do.

However, he has acknowledged that Illinois has a history of “serious problems” with the death penalty, and that if efforts had not been undertaken to clear the names of innocents who had been convicted in Illinois courts, that “terrible tragedies” could have occurred.

As we've discussed here often, money seems to be a growing factor in these debates.

Progress Illinois interviewed Rob Warden, the executive director of the Center for Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University's Law School, reports that over the past decade Illinois has spent \$120,000,000 from the Illinois Capital Litigation Trust Fund on a total of 20 capital cases.

Under the proposed legislation, these monies would go towards police training and funds supporting the families of homicide victims. Warden's position to Progress Illinois: "I can't imagine how any fiscally conservative person can favor this system."

Many still want to have capital punishment as an option.

Meanwhile, **Chicago Mayor Richard Daley has put his two cents worth** into the fray: he's told the press that he's all for the death penalty. The **Gallup Poll is being referenced often**, with its numbers showing that the majority of Americans approve of the death penalty -- and there's also **the point being made** that the majority of states do allow for capital punishment (as does the federal system and the U.S. Military).

Some are pushing Illinois as being an example for the country on what to do about the death penalty, suggesting that other states will follow Illinois' lead should Governor Quinn sign this bill into law.

However, this may or may not be the case. **Illinois is in dire financial straits, and this week Governor Quinn already okayed a massive increase in state income taxes.** You can imagine that the folk of Illinois are none too pleased about this decision - no matter if state legislators believe they had no option what with a budget over \$15 billion in the red and bills setting there for six months, unpaid. Governors are politicians. On the heels of this unpopular tax decision, will Quinn be proactive enough to sign the controversial death penalty bill into law? We're voting no. The easier road is to keep the status quo, capital punishment-wise, and then hold fast to the moratorium against executions that has been in place for Illinois these many years.