

Dear Prosecutor Deters,

I cannot express strongly enough how offensive and disheartening I found the public statement you made following the suicide of death row inmate Patrick Leonard. His death did not wipe away the loss and grief his victim's family was left with, so no good has come of it. The forcible taking of life is the worst crime against humanity, whether state sanctioned or not. In addition to going against a core value of my Christian faith, there is no conclusive evidence that capital punishment is a deterrent to murder. Additionally, it does nothing to assist the family members left behind, siphons significant and precious resources away from interventions that actually do make our communities safer, and gives the clear message that some lives are of no value and therefore disposable. Rather than demonstrating to society that all human life is inherently sacred by not condemning to death those who have sunken so low themselves as to kill, the death penalty only perpetuates a culture of death and the ideology of throwaway people. We can have justice without an "eye for an eye" system by utilizing life sentences, which are essentially death by prison anyway.

Regardless of your own obvious support for capital punishment, to refer to any death in as flippant and callous a way as you did by saying, "Finally someone on death row has died," is reprehensible. It sounded vengeful and bloodthirsty rather than honorable and respectable. You are meant to act in a manner above reproach that sets an example for the community you have been elected to serve. Instead, you sounded no different from any other murderer who has no regard for the sanctity of life. Justice with mercy, not glee in the death of another would be most appreciated.