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*Mr. Chairman
& members
of the Senate
Judiciary Committee*

~~Good morning.~~ My name is Andrea Wicker. I'm a concerned constituent from Washoe County.

"In 1988, my brother and his wife were viciously attacked and left for dead. Even though it was a horrific crime, I'm here to tell you that I oppose the death penalty. I support SB 217 because it would abolish the death penalty in Nevada."

My sister-in-law was attacked by a man who hid in the women's bathroom at a rest stop, waiting for a victim; he held her at knife point, threatening her and finally slitting her throat. My brother heard them struggling and rushed into the ladies room, where the attacker stabbed and slashed my brother multiple times. After this atrocity he forced them to walk to the men's room where they were told to remove their pants and shoes and instructed to put their hands up on the wall of a stall. My sister in law kept fainting and the attacker would scream at my brother to pick her up and make her stand. He then stole the keys to their truck and left, leaving them for dead. Fortunately, they were found by some other rest stop visitors, who called for an ambulance and the police. Experts at the trial testified that if my brother and his wife had been lying there for 15 more minutes, they would have both died.

Because they did not die, the attacker was charged and convicted of attempted murder. But, if my brother or his wife had died, the case would very likely have been a death penalty case.

Up until the trial for my brother's attacker, I was a strong supporter of the death penalty. I thought it was appropriate punishment for terribly violent criminals, individuals who had killed in situations similar to what happened to my brother and his wife.

During the trial, I completely changed my views about the death penalty, even though it was not a capital case. I realized how useless and wrong the death penalty is. . . . I realized that revenge was not going to end my feelings of fear and anger over the terrible crime. I saw the attacker's humanity and felt some measure of forgiveness, realizing that he was a human being who was sick and I felt sad that our society failed to help him before he hurt my brother and his wife.

People like my brother's attacker need to be locked up -- society has a right to protect itself from dangerous and violent people. That's why life imprisonment without possibility of parole is an appropriate punishment.

~~Do you have any questions?~~ I'd like to thank Senator Neal for sponsoring SB217

and Assemblyman Anderson & Leslie
for joint sponsoring