HJR66

LGFUYAY-1

By Representatives Jackson, Warren, Drummond, Ensler, Hollis, Rafferty, Hendrix, Lawrence, Travis, Sellers, McCampbell, Clarke, England, Hall, Morris

RFD: RULES

First Read: 27-Feb-24

HJR____ URGING THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA TO DECLARE A MORATORIUM ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT EXECUTIONS.

WHEREAS, the death penalty is a complicated and complex issue for both moral reasons and because the practice is greatly flawed; the appropriate resolution is a moratorium; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama is proudly a pro-life state and passionately defends the right to life; this passion for preserving life should extend to each and every citizen; a society that values life should not deliberately kill human beings; there is no moral ambiguity concerning the death penalty as a legal execution is still the murder of a human life; and

WHEREAS, Alabama sentences more people to death per capita than any other state; we have consistently lagged behind other states in revising outdated laws and procedures that govern sentencing; Alabama was the last state to abolish judicial override and used it to sentence more people to death than any other state; Alabama continues to allow death sentences to be imposed even when jury verdicts are not unanimous; currently, an alarming 80 percent of people sentenced to Alabama's death row did not receive unanimous jury verdicts; and

WHEREAS, since 1976, Alabama has executed 73 people

and exonerated nine which illustrates that for every eight people executed, one has been exonerated; in death penalty cases, perjury, false accusations, and official misconduct are the leading causes of wrongful convictions; further, a person does not need to be innocent to be wrongly sentenced to death; in Alabama, over 160 death sentences have been invalidated by state and federal courts, resulting in conviction of a lesser offense or lesser sentence on retrial; and

WHEREAS, other problems regarding death penalty convictions include potential failure to ensure that these cases are administered fairly and impartially in accordance with due process, the disproportionate number of minorities who are sentenced to death, the failure of the state to provide competent counsel to minorities and indigent people in capital cases, and evidence that the punishment of death is not an effective deterrent against criminal behavior; and

WHEREAS, 23 states have abolished the death penalty; six additional states have a gubernatorial hold on executions; and the federal government has declared a hold on executions pending review of policies and procedures; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the possibility of taking even one innocent life is too great a risk for the state to take and a moratorium on executions would relieve that risk; the Legislature is urged to take this matter into

consideration and declare a moratorium on capital punishment executions.