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ICDP 02/2022

**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

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Rodolfo Mattarollo,
(1939-2014)
Asma Jilani Jahangir
(1952-2018)

Secretariat

Pl. Marqués de Salamanca, 8
28006 Madrid, Spain
Tel: +00 34 91 3799458
asunta.vivo@icomdp.org



North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

The International Commission Against the Death Penalty mourns the passing away of Renny Cushing a powerful victim-abolitionist advocate who led the efforts to successfully repeal the death penalty in New Hampshire in 2019

It is with great sadness that the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) mourns the demise of the advocate for the abolition of the death penalty and our friend Renny Cushing.

Renny Cushing had dedicated his life as a powerful advocate to end capital punishment by speaking with and on behalf of victims who oppose capital punishment. He was the founder of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, which is now a very important voice in the death penalty abolitionist movement. His father's murder in 1988 has shaped his work as an advocate for crime victims and as an opponent of capital punishment. As a victim-abolitionist, Mr Cushing was a pioneer in the effort to bridge death penalty abolition groups and the victims' rights movement.

Renny Cushing was a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives where he was first elected in 1996. He had spent more than 20 years trying to repeal New Hampshire's death penalty law. During the 2019-20 legislative session, Mr Cushing led the effort in the New Hampshire General Court to approve legislation abolishing the capital punishment, including getting a successful bipartisan support of the required two-thirds majority in the House and Senate to override Governor Chris Sununu's veto. New Hampshire became the 21st state in the USA to abolish the death penalty.

Mr Cushing participated in several national and international events on the issue of the abolition of capital punishment and inspired several victims of the death penalty to organize and speak against capital punishment. He co-authored the book *Dignity Denied: The Experience of Murder Victims' Family Members Who Oppose the Death Penalty*, and *I Don't Want Another Kid to Die*, a collection of homicide family members' voices against the juvenile death penalty.

His words that "If we let those who kill turn us into killers, then evil triumphs and we all lose," summed up his beliefs and actions.

At ICDP, several Commissioners and the Secretariat staff had the privilege to know and to work with him. He will be highly missed by us as will the death penalty abolitionist movement. ICDP expresses our heart-felt condolences to his family members.

Background

Composed of 24 Commissioners of high international standing following decades' long, highly respected experiences in public service and representing all regions of the world, ICDP acts with total independence under the leadership of President Judge Navi Pillay.



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The Commission promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in States that observe a *de facto* moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in States that retain capital punishment. ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to advocate for worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

The work of ICDP is supported by a geographically diverse group of 23 Member-States who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.



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