

Support the Racial Justice Act

Please take the time to send a personalized letter to your senator. Use the following points as a guide, but if you add your own words, your senator will be more likely to read the letter and take it seriously.

- Race continues to play an undeniable part in North Carolina's use of the death penalty.
- A defendant in the state of North Carolina is 3.5 times more likely to get the death penalty if their victim is white than if their victims is a person of color.
- Prosecutors exclude people of color from sitting on juries in death penalty cases. Many African-Americans on North Carolina's death row were sentenced to death by all-white juries.
- Currently, a death row inmate is barred from presenting statistical evidence—often the best and most accessible form of proof—to show that racial discrimination took place in his case.

The NC Racial Justice Act would allow a person accused of a capital crime the opportunity of a court review of whether race played a part in the prosecutor's decision to seek the death penalty. If a defendant has already been sentenced to death, he may present evidence, if available, that his death sentence was improperly obtained on the basis of race. The act would allow a defendant to present statistical or other evidence to support such a claim. If a defendant succeeded in establishing his claim that race was a basis for his death sentence, the court could impose a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

The bill will be reintroduced in the next legislative session.