



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

Larry E. Craig, Chairman
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Bipartisan Support for the Death Penalty

Returning Capital Punishments to Federal Law

Today, for the first time since 1963, the Government of the United States of America executed a prisoner. Timothy James McVeigh was put to death after having been convicted of, and having confessed to, the murders of 168 men, women, and children who perished when McVeigh bombed a government building in Oklahoma City.

Had it not been for the persistence of some Senators and Representatives who fought for years to reinstate the Federal death penalty, the ultimate punishment would not have been available in McVeigh's case. As it was, the supporters of capital punishment succeeded just in time: The Act that restored the death penalty for the kinds of despicable crimes that McVeigh committed was signed in September of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-322, Title VI), just seven months before McVeigh detonated his bomb. The congressional fight to restore capital punishment had gone on for some 20 years, since the Supreme Court declared in *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972), that the nation's capital punishment statutes were unconstitutional as-then-applied.

In the United States Senate, one of the key votes in restoring the death penalty occurred on November 17, 1993, when the Senate defeated by a vote of 26-to-73 a Levin amendment that would have eliminated all capital punishments from the bill that later became Public Law 103-322. The amendment would have replaced all capital penalties with "the imposition of a sentence of mandatory life imprisonment without the possibility of release."

Fourteen percent of Republican Senators voted for the amendment, as did 36 percent of Democratic Senators. However, 86 percent of Republicans and 64 percent of Democrats voted against it. The following Senators who are members of the 107th Congress voted against the Levin amendment, which is why confessed mass-murderer Timothy McVeigh will not inhabit a Federal penitentiary for the rest of his natural life:

Republicans Bennett, Bond, Burns, Campbell, Cochran, Craig, Domenici, Gramm, Grassley, Gregg, Hatch, Helms, Hutchison, Lott, Lugar, McConnell, Murkowski, Nickles, Shelby, Bob Smith, Specter, Stevens, Thurmond, and Warner.

Democrats Baucus, Biden, Bingaman, Boxer, Breaux, Byrd, Conrad, Daschle, Dodd,

Feinstein, Graham, Hollings, Lieberman, Mikulski, Harry Reid, and Rockefeller. Senator Jeffords (now an Independent) also voted against the Levin amendment.

President George Bush issued the following statement this morning at the White House:

“STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON EXECUTION OF TIMOTHY MCVEIGH

“This morning, the United States of America carried out the severest sentence for the gravest of crimes. The victims of the Oklahoma City bombing have been given not vengeance, but justice. And one young man met the fate he chose for himself six years ago.

“For the survivors of the crime and for the families of the dead, the pain goes on. Final punishment of the guilty cannot alone bring peace to the innocent. It cannot recover the loss or balance the scales, and it is not meant to do so. Today, every living person who was hurt by the evil done in Oklahoma City can rest in the knowledge that there has been a reckoning. At every point, from the morning of April 19, 1995 to this hour, we have seen the good that overcomes evil.

“We saw it in the rescuers who saved and suffered with the victims. We have seen it in a community that has grieved and held close the memory of the lost. We have seen it in the work of detectives, marshals, and police. And we've seen it in the courts. Due process ruled. The case was proved. The verdict was calmly reached. And the rights of the accused were protected and observed to the full and to the end.

“Under the laws of our country, the matter is concluded. Life and history bring tragedies, and often they cannot be explained. But they can be redeemed. They are redeemed by dispensing justice, though eternal justice is not ours to deliver. By remembering those who grieve, including Timothy McVeigh's mother, father and sisters, and by trusting in purposes greater than our own, may God in his mercy grant peace to all; to the lives that were taken six years ago, to the lives that go on, and to the life that ended today.”