

Dear Members of the Kentucky General Assembly:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 251. It is my understanding that this bill will allow the Department of Corrections to make changes to its death-penalty regulations more quickly, thus allowing Kentucky to move more quickly to restart executions for inmates like Ralph Baze whose appeals are exhausted. I wholeheartedly support anything, including Senate Bill 251, that will cut down on the intolerable delay in seeing that justice is served for my brother and brother-in law.

My family and I want justice.

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And we have been waiting on it for over three decades since a jury handed down the punishment of the death penalty to Ralph Baze, who ambushed two police officers - a sheriff and a deputy - in Powell County, Kentucky on January 30, 1992 who were simply trying to serve an out-of-state warrant. They were killed with an SKS semi-automatic assault rifle.

Sheriff Steve Bennett, only 40 years old, bled to death in the back seat of his cruiser after Baze shot him three times on the left side of his back. He left behind a daughter in elementary school and a son not quite four years old at the time. Steve was actually my brother-in-law.

Deputy Arthur Briscoe was my big brother and just 39 years old. Baze shot him twice in the back and once in the back of the head. Arthur left behind a 14-year-old son.

I'll never forget the words of my mother as we pulled away from the courthouse after the verdict came in. She said, "Me and your Daddy may never see it carried out but maybe you kids will." I remember thinking at the time how ridiculous that sounded but my prophetic her words became over the many years that we have been waiting for Baze to pay for what he did.

Unfortunately my father never lived to see justice for his son. Dad died a few years ago at the age of 93 but I sincerely hope my Mom, who is 93, will not have the same fate.

I have felt over the past three decades that Kentucky officials had forgotten all about how brutally Steve & Arthur were murdered but hopefully that wrong can be righted in the near future. Because Senate Bill 251 will help fix the decades of delay in carrying out the death penalty in Kentucky, I very much support this bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Briscoe Lally