

# Gov. O'Malley signs death penalty restrictions

Gov. Martin J. O'Malley signed a bill May 7 that imposes significant restrictions on the death penalty in Maryland. The new law allows capital punishment only in murder cases where there is biological evidence, videotaped evidence or a videotaped confession.

Maryland's Catholic bishops had supported the governor's effort earlier in the legislative session to abolish the death penalty completely. They also supported the bill that the governor signed into law.

While Mary Ellen Russell, executive director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, was pleased that Maryland has made it more difficult to apply the death penalty, she said she will work to win full repeal in future legislative sessions.

Vicki Schieber, a Catholic advocate for abolishing the death penalty, attended the signing ceremony on the anniversary of the murder of her daughter, Shannon. Vicki Schieber served on the Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment with Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden. The commission recommended an end to the death penalty in Maryland.