

Ohioans to Stop Executions

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://otse.org/toward-improved-death-penalty/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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[Hannah Kubbins](#) / July 21, 2017

Sherri Bevan Walsh and colleagues in the Summit County prosecutors office made the right call in altering how they choose whether to pursue the death penalty. As Stephanie Warsmith, a Beacon Journal staff writer, reported this week, prosecutors will meet with defense attorneys at the start of the process to examine evidence that indicates life in prison would be a more fitting punishment.

In doing so, the prosecutors office is taking the path of other larger Ohio counties. It is a sensible course, one that reflects recent events here. Of the past 10 capital punishment cases brought by the prosecutors office, one has resulted in the jury arriving at a death sentence.

Those outcomes conform with a pattern across the state since juries gained the sentencing option of life in prison without the possibility of parole. A capital punishment case proceeds in two parts, first, a trial to determine whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty, and second, the punishment phase, during which the defense presents mitigating evidence, attempting to show why a death sentence would not be appropriate.

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