

JGL Eye

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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Two Relatives of Murdered Filipino Americans in Illinois Have Opposing Views on Capital Punishment

CHICAGO (jGLi) – Two surviving Filipino Americans whose members of their families were victims of murders in Illinois share opposite views on death penalty.

I sought out their views following the signing Wednesday (March 9) by Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn of the ban of death penalty, making Illinois the 16th state to end capital punishment.

Two Murder-Victims' Kin Part Ways on Death Penalty - MabuhayRadio

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As you know, the Philippines is one of the 95 out of the 193 members of the United Nations or members with UN observer status, which abolished death penalty. The Philippines is only one of eight out of 41 countries in Asia, which abolished capital punishment.

Of course, the People's Republic of China is one of the countries, which is keeping death penalty in its books. And if it stays that way, it is going to be a frequent travel destination for Filipino diplomats, who would be appealing the stays of execution of 79 Filipinos in Death Row for "large-scale drug trafficking."

NOT THRILLED BY ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY

F or Reyle V. Cardino, 53, whose parents were murdered on July 8, 2009, in their home in the outlying Chicago suburb of Rockford, Illinois, said he is not thrilled by the decision of the Democratic governor.

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In an email to this reporter, Reyle (pronounced reel) said, "Let me start by saying that I was completely against the abolition of the death penalty in Illinois. I have sent an email to the Governor myself, telling him my feelings towards this issue."

He added, "I was assured by the Winnebago County State Attorney Joe Bruscato that if (the bill is) signed, there will be initiatives to put a bill together to re-instate the death penalty in Illinois. And so far, there is already movement. I just hope that this issue will be put before the people of Illinois

nois
to vote. We might find (out how) the people of
Illinois
(stand on) the death penalty."

Because the case of the double murder of his father, Reynato "Rey" V. Cardino, 77, and his mother, Leticia Villanueva Cardino, 75, is still pending, Reyle anticipates "a delay (of the case) until the issue of the death penalty is settled."

With the case still very fresh in his mind, Reyle believes, "life in prison (for the killer of his parents) alternative is not enough." He said, "This is not the Middle Age anymore where, life in prison means being hung up against a wall with chains until (the prisoner is) dead."

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Reyle added, "Having to spend the rest of his natural life in prison, where he can start a whole new way of life, have friends and family come visit, is not penalty enough (for the killer of his parents).

"Have TV, food to eat, a roof over his head, a library, a gym and maybe a movie once a week, is not penalty enough. He will put what he had done in the back of his memories and live his new life. He will not forget us, but he will not think of us, is not penalty enough."

"He brutally attacked me and left me for dead, brutally attacked and caused the death of my mother and father. (With t)he trauma that he had inflicted on my family, does he deserve to die? (In t)his case I say yes overwhelmingly."

Like State Attorney Bruscato, other Illinois state prosecutors, among them, Illinois State Attorney General Lisa Madigan, had asked Quinn to veto the bill, saying videotaped interrogations and advancements in DNA technology had left no room for wrongful executions of innocent people. Taped interrogations were one of the features of a bill filed by President Barack Obama when he was an Illinois state senator.

"I LOVE BAN OF DEATH PENALTY"

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For his part, Emmanuel S. Castro, 69, told me “I love it that there is no more death penalty in Illinois.”

Castro, a Filipino-American native of Bulacan in the Philippines, is the father of Michael Castro, one of the two Filipinos and five others, who were massacred in 1993 in suburban Palatine

,
Illinois

“I have since changed my mind regarding death penalty. *Papatayin natin ang mga* murderer, *paano kung wala naman palang*

life after death?

Di hindi na sila mapaparusahan ng Diyos

.” (Okay, if we hang the murderers, what if there is no life after death? They will be spared from the punishment of God.”

“*Kung nasa kulungan sila, paglalaruan lang sila ng mga* inmates. (If they in prison, they will be pestered by other inmates). Their human bodies will suffer,” Mr. Castro said.

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When I told him that hanging two inmates would be two mouths less to feed and saving from additional expenses, Mr. Castro countered, "You are talking about expenses not my feelings."

"Besides," Mr. Castro said, "because Death Row inmates are not granted parole, they will be forever suffering in isolation. They will miss birthdays of their children, the Christmas and other holidays while they are alive. No television. They only have one-hour-a day of recreation and no comfort in life at all. Only full of miseries."

Mr. Castro said he did not get any civil damages from the owners of the fast food chain, Brown Chicken's restaurant, because it was proven in court that the owners were not negligent – as the husband-and-wife restaurant owners Richard Ehlenfeldt and his wife, Lynn, were among those who were murdered along with his son.

"Even if I benefited from the death of my son, they can no longer have my Michael back."

It was a rare interview granted to this reporter by Mr. Castro, who declined to be interviewed by *Discovery Channel* some time ago, saying, "I did not want to relive the nightmare that we suffered as a result of the

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death of my son.”

The killers of his son, Juan Luna and James Degorski, were both spared from Death Row and are now living a life in prison. # # #

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