

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 12, 2025

The Hon. Mike Redondo  
1301 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

***Re: Opposition to HB 693***

Dear Representative Redondo:

We write to express our opposition to HB 693 that would add the aggravating factor that "the victim of the capital felony was gathered with one or more persons for a school activity, religious activity, or public government meeting" to those considered by juries in sentencing for capital crimes.

We naturally concur that for anyone to commit a mass murder, especially at a school or church, is a grave evil. We affirm also that the government has a duty to prevent such crimes, to punish the offender, and to protect the public.

Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to conclude that killing the offender is not a good solution. On the question of deterrence, when in so many awful cases the perpetrator is deeply disturbed and often intends to die in the event, it is doubtful that the death penalty will have any deterrent effect at all. For those few in a state of mind to calculate such things, the loss of freedom for the rest of their lives is already a deterrent.

As you know, seeking death is costlier to taxpayers than a life sentence without parole because of trial costs and the necessary appeals before the state can deprive someone of life. Furthermore, it often delays reaching a sense of closure for the families and friends of victims of these heinous crimes as appeals wear on.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about these concerns. Thank you for your thoughtful service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President