

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



July 22, 2025

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Please stay the execution of Edward Zakrzewski and commute his sentence

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We write to ask you to grant a stay of the execution of Edward Zakrzewski and to commute his sentence to life without parole.

Zakrzewski was convicted and sentenced to death for brutally murdering his wife, Sylvia, his seven-year-old son, Edward, and his five-year-old daughter, Anna, in 1994. We mourn the tragic deaths of Zakrzewski's victims. Their relatives experienced terrible suffering at the time of the crimes and have had to live with painful loss ever since. May they find comfort in God. Indeed, the Church remains available to assist them with pastoral care and spiritual guidance.

In recent comments, Governor, you stated that some crimes are just so horrific the only appropriate punishment is the death penalty. Given the horrifying nature of Zakrzewski's acts, one may well ask why anyone would speak up on his behalf. We certainly agree that his crimes are especially heinous, and that civilized society cannot function if they can be committed with impunity. But the alternative to the death penalty is not letting murderers go free, but life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

In the context of this reality, even as we care for victims of violent crime, we urge you to spare Mr. Zakrzewski's life. Every human life, given by God, is sacred. There is a way to punish without ending another human life: life-long incarceration without the possibility of parole is a severe yet more humane punishment that ensures societal safety, allows the guilty the possibility of redemption, and offers finality to court processes.

We pray for the family of Sylvia, Edward, and Anna. We pray for you, too, Governor, as you consider this request.

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: Jason Weida, Esq., Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Governor
Catholic Bishops of Florida