

Have you heard of the NC Racial Justice Act?

Have you heard of the NC Racial Justice Act? Did you realize that in August 2009 our NC elected officials enacted such a law? Do you know that this law gives murderers the right to escape a death sentence if they can prove statistically their race is tried for the death penalty more than another race? Where is the justice?

Let me introduce myself... I am *Jennifer Shelton*, widow of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Officer Jeff Shelton EOW 4/1/07. Over three years ago, my husband was brutally murdered while on duty. Jeff and his partner Officer Sean Clark were killed while responding to an unrelated disturbance call.

For over three years, the families of Jeff and Sean have been waiting for their accused killer to go to trial. We had a trial date set for July 12, 2010 but on April 29, 2010 we were called in to court. The defense argued a motion using the Racial Justice Act and Judge Forrest D. Bridges granted the defense motion. This resulted in another delay while the statistics of death penalty cases across the state could be analyzed. I am outraged! This law provides nothing but another delay tactic for defense to use. The person who murdered my husband should pay the price for the crime he committed! This is not a racial crime. Two of Charlotte's finest were brutally murdered while going about the job they loved. They deserve justice.

For the last two weeks, I have been visiting Raleigh to discuss this act with our elected officials. I also participated in a press conference with officials who want to see this law changed. Last week I met with Governor Bev Perdue who signed this Act into law on August 11, 2009. I want to see this law changed!

What I really want is to see the NC Racial Justice Act repealed. I don't believe a person is tried based on the color of their skin. I believe a person is tried based on the crime he committed. However, I feel this law should at the very least be modified to allow for post conviction use only. We were the first case in the State to have a hearing on the Racial Justice Act. Since our court date on April 29, 2010, 20 other pre-trial cases have filed using the Racial Justice Act. That means that 20 families are on hold waiting for justice in the death of their loved one. Can you believe that a trial of the murders of two police officers is the catalyst of delays across the state? Can you imagine the financial impact on our state that before a person is found guilty of murder they are allowed to say they are only getting the death penalty due to their race? Is this the standard we want set in NC? I am appalled that our law makers are allowing this to happen.

I am asking for your help. Please call, write or email our elected officials in Raleigh. Let them know you do not agree with the Racial Justice Act and you will hold them accountable for their vote on this matter. Urge them to modify this bill so our justice system will not be clogged with these claims of Racial Bias. Let them know that we the voters are outraged and are not going to sit quietly by and allow them to provide more rights to the criminals and none to the victims.

If I can provide you any assistance in locating your elected officials or if you have any questions regarding the Racial Justice Act please feel free to contact me at jshelton2884@gmail.com. I will gladly help you in anyway including letting you know who voted for this Act. I appreciate your help and support.

Jennifer Shelton

Widow of Officer Jeff Shelton

Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department
End of Watch 4/1/07