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The New Hampshire Senate's vote to repeal the death penalty is "an enormous victory for life," according to the executive director of the Catholic Mobilizing Network.

The New Hampshire Senate voted 17-6 April 11 to repeal the state's death penalty law. This follows a 279-88 vote for repeal by the state House in March.

"The overwhelming margins by which the repeal bill passed through the Legislature sends a strong message about the state's priority to put an end to the death penalty," said an April 12 statement by Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy. "It speaks to a long-term decline in support for capital punishment found not only in New Hampshire, but across the United States as a whole."

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu has threatened to veto the bill, but the original vote in each chamber passed by margins wide enough to override a veto. A two-thirds vote is required to override.

"Catholic Mobilizing Network celebrates this encouraging progress and looks forward to the day when the state officially unshackles itself from the death penalty once and for all," Murphy said.

New Hampshire has not put a prisoner to death since 1939. However, there is one man on the state's death row, but the state's corrections department said there are

no immediate plans to acquire the drugs necessary to execute him.

The repeal bill is not retroactive, so it will not apply to Michael Addison, found guilty of the 2006 murder of a police officer in Manchester, New Hampshire's largest city. The bill replaces the death penalty with life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Sununu, a Republican, vetoed a capital punishment repeal bill last year that lawmakers failed to override. Then-Gov. Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat, also vetoed a repeal bill in 2000 that was sustained. A 2014 effort to repeal the death penalty failed on a tie vote.

According to the Manchester Union Leader, once the bill is signed by the House speaker, Senate president and secretary of state, Sununu will have five business days to either veto the bill, sign it or let it become law without a signature.

An April 11 statement issued by the governor's office said, "Governor Sununu continues to stand with crime victims, members of the law enforcement community, and advocates for justice in opposing a repeal of the death penalty."

New Hampshire is the last state in New England where the death penalty is still on the books.

In March, Gov. Gavin Newsom imposed a moratorium on executions in California, the nation's most populous state – and most populous death row, with 737 men and women.

If the New Hampshire repeal bid succeeds, it would become the 21st state to abolish the death penalty.

Since the death penalty was found by the Supreme Court in 1978 to be constitutional, more than 7,800 people have been sentenced to death, and close to 1,500 executed. Another 161, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, were exonerated from their crime prior to execution. After California's moratorium, there are still about 2,000 prisoners on death row. The federal government and the military also authorize the use of capital punishment.

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