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Death row inmates could be executed by firing squad in Florida

by Judy Gross

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. ? Former marketing executive and now Florida State Rep. Brad Drake wants to give death row inmates the option of using a firing squad instead of lethal injection when they are executed.

Drake, a Republican, came up with this idea from a constituent he talked to in a Waffle House, according to *The Current*, an online news source covering Florida politics.

Drake told *The Current* that he decided to file the bill, called HB 325, after he overheard a constituent say, ?You know, they ought to just put them in the electric chair or line them up in front of a firing squad.?

?There shouldn't be anything controversial about a .45-caliber bullet,? Drake told *The Current*. ?If it were up to me we would just throw them off the Sunshine Skyway Bridge [in Tampa Bay] and be done with it.?

Florida began to use lethal injections after a malfunction of the electric chair during Pedro Medina's execution in 1997, when Medina appeared to be on fire.

With the looming scarcity of drugs used in lethal injection (NCR, Sept. 16), Drake's bill would allow inmates to opt for execution by firing squad, which involves lining up several shooters to kill the inmate. The bill does not detail the process for assembling a firing squad.

Whether Drake's bill receives a committee hearing before the 2012 legislative session is unclear.

Meanwhile, State Rep. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, D-Tallahassee, has filed a bill to abolish the death penalty for the second year in a row. In 2010, the bill didn't get a committee hearing, but with a budget-

conscious Republican Gov. Rick Scott looking for places to cut spending, Rehwinkel Vasilinda wrote to the governor pointing out the enormous costs of execution compared to life in prison with no chance of parole.

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