



# The Florida House of Representatives

**Paul Renner**  
Speaker

## NEWS RELEASE

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## House Approves Bill to Reform Capital Sentencing Statute

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (April 13, 2023)** — Today, the Florida House of Representatives passed legislation to reform Florida’s capital sentencing statute. Senate Bill 450 (House Bill 555) revises Florida law to require a jury to recommend a sentence of death to the court if at least eight out of twelve jurors determine a defendant should be sentenced to death.

Florida House Speaker Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast) said, “In the most egregious case in Florida’s recent history where the vast majority of Floridians would agree the death penalty was in order – the Parkland killer – three jurors derailed the full administration of justice and the judge was forced to impose a sentence of life in prison. If we’re going to have a death penalty for the most heinous crimes, we should have a threshold that makes sense and a 2-1 majority is reasonable both to defendants and victims’ families.”

Bill sponsor, Representative Berny Jacques (R-Seminole), added, “Under this bill, to convict someone of a crime eligible for the death penalty, all 12 jurors would still have to agree – unanimously – to convict the defendant of the crime. During the penalty phase, all 12 jurors would still have to agree that an aggravating factor exists that would make the defendant eligible for the death penalty. By reforming the last portion of this process, we are ensuring that justice prevails.”

The bill retains the requirement for a jury to unanimously find that at least one aggravating factor was proved beyond a reasonable doubt to make a defendant eligible for a death sentence and a court to impose a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole when a jury recommends such a sentence. The bill also retains the court’s ability, upon receiving a jury’s recommendation of a death sentence, to consider specified factors and impose either a sentence of life imprisonment or a death sentence.

For more information on Senate Bill 450 (House Bill 555), visit [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov).

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