

# Statement from U.S. Attorney Andrew E. Lelling on the reversal of Tsarnaev's death penalty sentence

"After extensive deliberations, including consideration of the views of the many victims in this case, the Justice Department has decided to ask the Supreme Court to review the First Circuit Court of Appeals' decision to reverse the death penalty, in an effort to preserve the jury's verdict sentencing Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to death. Our hope is that this will result in reinstatement of the original sentence and avoid a retrial of the death penalty phase.

First, we respectfully disagree with the merits of the appellate court's decision. Second, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is an ideologically driven mass killer who, with his brother, detonated at the finish line of the Boston Marathon two home-made bombs specifically designed to rip people apart, killing three – a young boy and two women – maiming seventeen, and injuring hundreds; shot a police officer three times in the head so they could steal his sidearm; and exchanged thousands of rounds with police officers in Watertown.

I have heard, and respect, the voices calling for the Department to drop its pursuit of the death penalty in this case. But the severity of Tsarnaev's crimes place him in that narrow category of criminals for whom death is a proportional punishment.

Some have argued that executing Tsarnaev will not deter others from pursuing similar crimes. But, ultimately, this decision is not about deterrence. It is about justice."