

Kassidy case prompts proposal of Maine death penalty bill

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — The death of a 21-month-old New Hampshire girl last November has prompted a Maine lawmaker to seek to reinstate the death penalty in his state.

Rep. Jay MacDougall, R-North Berwick, says the killing of Kassidy Bortner of Rochester, N.H., sparked debate in his district over penalties for those who kill children. Bortner was staying with a Kittery couple the day she died. Her mother's live-in boyfriend has been charged with the girl's death.

MacDougall's proposal calls for the death penalty for people convicted of killing children 6 years old or younger.

But the measure received a frosty reception by a legislative committee. MacDougall, the bill's sponsor, was the only person to speak in favor of the measure. Representatives of the Maine Council of Churches and the Department of Corrections spoke out against the proposal. If the Legislature approves the bill, it would go to Maine voters to decide in a referendum next November.