

# El Dorado County supervisor wants to get rid of death penalty

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Ron Briggs recalls turning 21 just in time to hoist an alcoholic drink in celebration of the 1978 victory of Proposition 7, his family's initiative that broadened the application of the death penalty.

At 54, the conservative Republican El Dorado County supervisor is no longer celebrating that win.

He is campaigning against the law he once believed would execute the worst criminals, a law he says went badly wrong. The law was well-drafted enough to survive court challenges, but its consequences are "horrible," Briggs said last week, sitting on the same land outside Placerville where his family came up with the initiative.

His father, former state Sen. John Briggs, led the campaign for Proposition 7, which broadly rewrote the state's laws regarding murder: increasing penalties for first- and second-degree murder; revising and expanding the special circumstances categories that require the death penalty or life in prison; and revising laws related to mitigating and aggravating circumstances.

John Briggs does not share his son's opposition to the death penalty but agrees that the death penalty is not working as the initiative intended.

"What's not working is the application of the sentence," he said. "Sentences aren't being carried out."

This month, Ron Briggs expects to help deliver initiative

signatures to put capital punishment's repeal on the ballot in November.

**Read the whole story**