

# High cost of death penalty could affect Nev.

By Ana Ley, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada's criminal justice system spends nearly twice as much handling death penalty cases compared with murder cases where capital punishment isn't sought, according to a report released Tuesday by state auditors.

The state-mandated study, which surveyed data from 27 state and local agencies, gives ammunition to death penalty opponents who have failed to defeat public support for capital punishment using moral objections. It is, by far, Nevada's most comprehensive study on the controversial practice and will serve as a law makers' guide for years to come.

"As we move into the next (legislative) session and the session after that, we would still be able to use this as basic information to frame the discussion around the death penalty for a while," Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, D-Las Vegas, said after auditors Paul Townsend and Dan Crossman presented the study before a legislative panel in Carson City. "It's very thorough."

Auditors assembled the 105-page report by sampling data from 28 cases, calculating costs associated with legal counsel – both defense and prosecution – as well as for money spent on court proceedings and incarceration.

**Read the whole story**