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previous question.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President. In this morning's World-Herald on page 3 is an article, the headline of which is "Illinois Will Halt, Study Executions". Below that is a smaller headline: "Governor To Grant Stays, Name Panel". It's a reprint from the Washington Post, probably excerpts: Illinois Governor George Ryan has decided to effectively impose a moratorium on the death penalty in Illinois until an inquiry has been conducted into why more death row inmates have been exonerated than executed since capital punishment was reinstated in 1977. A senior aide to the Republican Governor said Ryan will announce today that he plans to block executions by granting stays before any scheduled lethal injections are administered. The move would keep condemned prisoners under the death sentence, but would indefinitely postpone their execution. Departing from the article, that was the approach attempted by Senator Brashear, myself and others who supported the idea of a moratorium, in numbers large enough to pass a bill with that provision in it. The Governor chose to veto it. Fortunately for the people in Illinois, not all "Repelican" Governors are cut from the same cloth. "There are innumerable opportunities along the way for serious errors, and the Governor wants to take a pause here," Ryan's Press Secretary Dennis Culloton said Sunday, "He wants to be absolutely sure the system is working and that only the clearly guilty are being executed." Ryan's aide said the Governor is convinced that the death penalty system in Illinois is "fraught with errors" and "broken" and should be suspended until thoroughly investigated. Since capital punishment was reinstated 23 years ago, 13 death row inmates have been cleared of murder charges and 12 have been put to death. Departing from the article to make a comment, more have been exonerated than have been executed, but it is not through the actions of the prosecutor, judges, or any of those whose job it is to ensure that justice is properly dispensed. It was due to the work of others outside the system who presented cases so compelling that they could not be turned away from, and these men, who faced the prospect of being murdered by the state, because they had committed no crime, were rescued from death row. Because of the problems with these 13 who were plucked from death row, it can be said, probably without fear of any rational contradiction, that some, if not all, of those 12 executed also were innocent.