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## Alabama Lawmakers Push for Death Penalty in Wake of Child Abuse Bunker Case

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**Brent, Alabama** — Two Alabama legislators are calling for the state's death penalty to be expanded to include those convicted of raping or sexually assaulting young children, following the arrest of seven individuals in connection with a harrowing child abuse investigation in Bibb County.

State Representative Matt Simpson and Senator April Weaver are leading efforts to introduce a bill that would make capital punishment applicable in cases involving the rape or sodomy of a child under the age of 12. The proposal comes after a group of

suspects was charged with a range of serious offences, including child rape, sexual torture, and human trafficking.

“This would provide prosecutors with an additional tool in especially severe cases,” Rep. Simpson said. “Whether to pursue the death penalty would be at the discretion of the local district attorney.” Senator Weaver added: “No one with a sense of morality could look at the facts of this case and argue that the death penalty is not an appropriate option.”

Authorities say the alleged abuse occurred inside a storm shelter in the town of Brent. Police began their investigation in February following a tip-off from the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). Seven suspects were later arrested in connection with the case: William Chase McElroy, 21; Dalton Terrell, 21; Timothy St. John, 23; Ricky Terrell, 44; Andres Trejo-Velazquez, 29; Rebecca Brewer, 29; and Sara Louis Terrell, 41.

The children involved, who were between the ages of three and 15, are now in protective custody. Prosecutors allege that several of the suspects participated in organised acts of abuse, with charges ranging from rape and sodomy to human trafficking and kidnapping. One suspect faces additional charges related to the use of controlled substances and the alleged production of unlawful content.

Officials described the storm bunker where the abuse reportedly occurred as being in a state of severe disrepair, containing minimal furnishings and signs of prolonged confinement. Images released by law enforcement showed a dirty, bare interior, consistent with the conditions described in official reports.

All suspects are currently being held pending further legal proceedings and are expected to return to court for arraignment in August. The full extent of the alleged abuse is still under investigation, and additional charges may be forthcoming.

If passed, the proposed legislation would mark a major shift in Alabama’s criminal justice policy, reinforcing the state’s commitment to imposing the highest penalties for crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children.