DEATH PENALTY STATES (28)
Alabama
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Virginia
Wyoming
U.S. Gov’t
U.S. Military

NON-DEATH PENALTY STATES
(22)
Alaska
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Hawaii
Illinois
Iowa
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Dakota
Rhode Island
Vermont
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
District of Columbia
† 1 prisoner remains on death row.

NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976: 1529

RACE OF DEFENDANTS EXECUTED

White: 853
Black: 521
Hispanic: 129
Other: 26

More than 75% of the murder victims in cases resulting in an execution were white, even though nationally only 50% of murder victims generally are white.

RACE OF VICTIMS IN DEATH PENALTY CASES

White: 76%
Black: 15%
Hispanic: 7%
Other: 2%

• White: 853
• Black: 521
• Hispanic: 129
• Other: 26

DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER
Facts about the Death Penalty

Updated: January 4, 2021
Persons Executed for Interracial Murders

- Since 1973, more than 170 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. (Staff Report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil & Constitutional Rights, 1993, with updates by DPIC).
- An average of 3.5 wrongly convicted death-row prisoners have been exonerated each year since 1973, peaking at 7.6 per year between 1999-2004.

Race of Death Row Prisoners and Death Row Prisoners by State Source: NAACP Legal Defense Fund, “Death Row USA” (October 1, 2020). The combined state totals are slightly higher than the reported national total. That is because a few prisoners are sentenced to death in more than one state. Those prisoners are included in each state’s totals, but only once in the national total.
EXECUTIONS BY STATE SINCE 1976

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>FL</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>TN</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>AR</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXECUTIONS BY REGION*

- **South**: 1248
- **Midwest**: 190
- **West**: 87
- **Northeast**: 4
- **Texas**: 570

*Federal executions are listed in the region in which the crime was committed.

DEATH SENTENCING

295 death sentences were imposed in the U.S. in 1998. The number of death sentences per year has dropped dramatically since then.

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<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>


MENTAL DISABILITIES

- **Intellectual Disabilities**: In 2002, the Supreme Court held in Atkins v. Virginia that it is unconstitutional to execute defendants with 'mental retardation.'
- **Mental Illness**: The American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and the American Bar Association have endorsed resolutions calling for an exemption of the severely mentally ill.

DETERRENCE

According to a survey of the former and present presidents of the country's top academic criminological societies, 88% of these experts rejected the notion that the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder.

A report by the National Research Council, titled Deterrence and the Death Penalty, stated that studies claiming that the death penalty has a deterrent effect on murder rates are "fundamentally flawed" and should not be used when making policy decisions (2012).

A DPIC study of 30 years of FBI Uniform Crime Report homicide data found that the South has consistently had by far the highest murder rate. The South accounts for more than 80% of executions. The Northeast, which has fewer than 0.5% of all executions, has consistently had the lowest murder rate.

EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976 BY METHOD USED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lethal Injection</td>
<td>1349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrocution</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas Chamber</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firing Squad</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 states plus the US government use lethal injection as their primary method. Some states utilizing lethal injection have other methods available as backups. New Hampshire abolished the death penalty in 2019, but the law was not retroactive, leaving one prisoner on death row and the lethal injection protocol intact.

JUVENILES

- In 2005, the Supreme Court in Roper v. Simmons struck down the death penalty for juveniles. Since 1976, 22 defendants had been executed for offenses committed as juveniles.

WOMEN

- There were 57 women on death row as of July 1, 2019. This constitutes less than 2% of the total death row population. (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, July 1, 2019). 16 women have been executed since 1976.
PUBLIC OPINION AND THE DEATH PENALTY

Support for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

• A 2010 poll by Lake Research Partners found that a clear majority of voters (61%) would choose a punishment other than the death penalty for murder.

What Interferes with Effective Law Enforcement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Ranking Item as One of Top Two or Three</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of law enforcement resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug/Alcohol abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family problems/child abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of programs for mentally ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective prosecution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too many guns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient use of the death penalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A 2009 poll commissioned by DPIC found police chiefs ranked the death penalty last among ways to reduce violent crime. The police chiefs also considered the death penalty the least efficient use of taxpayers’ money.

FINANCIAL FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

- Oklahoma capital cases cost, on average, 3.2 times more than non-capital cases. (Study prepared by Peter A. Collins, Matthew J. Hickman, and Robert C. Boruchowitz, with research support by Alexa D. O’Brien, for the Oklahoma Death Penalty Review Commission, 2017.)
- Defense costs for death penalty trials in Kansas averaged about $400,000 per case, compared to $100,000 per case when the death penalty was not sought. (Kansas Judicial Council, 2014).
- A study in California revealed that the cost of the death penalty in the state has been over $4 billion since 1978. Study considered pre-trial and trial costs, costs of automatic appeals and state habeas corpus petitions, costs of federal habeas corpus appeals, and costs of incarceration on death row. (Alarcon & Mitchell, 2011).
- Enforcing the death penalty costs Florida $51 million a year above what it would cost to punish all first-degree murderers with life in prison without parole. Based on the 44 executions Florida had carried out since 1976, that amounts to a cost of $24 million for each execution. (Palm Beach Post, January 4, 2000).
- The most comprehensive study in the country found that the death penalty costs North Carolina $2.16 million per execution over the costs of sentencing murderers to life imprisonment. The majority of those costs occur at the trial level. (Duke University, May 1993).
- In Texas, a death penalty case costs an average of $2.3 million, about three times the cost of imprisoning someone in a single cell at the highest security level for 40 years. (Dallas Morning News, March 8, 1992).

The Death Penalty Information Center has available more extensive reports on a variety of issues, including:

- “The Death Penalty in 2020: Year-End Report” (December 2020)
- “Enduring Injustice: the Persistence of Racial Discrimination in the U.S. Death Penalty” (September 2020)
- “Behind the Curtain: Secrecy and the Death Penalty in the United States” (November 2018)
- “Battle Scars: Military Veterans and the Death Penalty” (November 2015)
- “The 2% Death Penalty: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases at Enormous Costs to All” (October 2013)
- “Struck By Lightning: The Continuing Arbitrariness of the Death Penalty 35 Years After Its Reinstatement in 1976” (June 2011)
- “Smart on Crime: Reconsidering the Death Penalty in a Time of Economic Crisis” (October 2009)
- “A Crisis of Confidence: Americans’ Doubts About the Death Penalty” (2007)
- “Blind Justice: Juries Deciding Life and Death with Only Half the Truth” (2005)
- “Innocence and the Crisis in the American Death Penalty” (2004)