

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S DEATH PENALTY



**CATHOLIC
MOBILIZING
NETWORK**

ENDING THE DEATH PENALTY.
PROMOTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE.

The Facts

- 1 person currently on death row
- 0 executions since 1976
- 24 executions before 1976
- Jury decides the sentence
- Life without parole is a sentencing option
- Method of execution: lethal injection; hanging if injection not possible
- Only state in New England that still has the death penalty

New Voices

Two former New Hampshire Supreme Court justices came together to voice their opinion against the death penalty, saying the death penalty fails to serve any good purpose:

"Can the purpose be deterrence, when analysis and experience show that those who kill do not consider the sentence before they act...?"

"Can the purpose be to save tax dollars, when it has been well established that to seek and carry out the death penalty costs more than to prosecute and imprison a person for life?"

"If the purpose is to provide justice for victims, isn't justice served by sensitivity to their plight by swift apprehension and vigorous prosecution of murderers...?"

New Hampshire Bishops Stand Against Capital Punishment

In 2014, Bishop Libasci preached his support of a bill to end the use of the death penalty in New Hampshire: "The teaching of the Church which I represent here today and to which I hold firm recognize that the imposition of the death penalty signals neither a firm commitment to the sacredness of human life itself nor the desire for the betterment of society, but signals a collapse into defeat by a society that tries to make itself believe falsely that we can defend life by taking life."

The **Diocese of Manchester** teaches about the death penalty as a part of their mission to uphold the dignity of this.

Visit their website to learn more: www.catholicnh.org

COSTS

To understand the wasteful spending of the death penalty, the trial costs of New Hampshire's only death row inmate, Michael Addison, have been compared to the average cost of noncapital murder trials:

Prosecution costs:

Michael Addison trial: \$2.3 million

Non-Capital trials:
\$50,00-\$100,000

Defense costs:

Addison: \$2.6 million
Non-Capital
\$50,000-\$100,000

Superior Court costs:

Addison: \$166,000
Non-Capital: \$13,000

Additional costs:

If Addison exhausts all his appeals and an execution is to be carried out, the state would need to build a death chamber, estimated at \$1.7 million.

NOT A DETERRENT

New England has one of the lowest crime rates in the country and the crime rate continues to drop as the region has eliminated its use of executions. In the South, where 82% of the nation's executions have occurred since 1976, the murder rate has actually increased in recent years.

New Hampshire is one of the safest states in the country and has had no executions since 1939.

The Church and State Speak

The Church Speaks

Evangelium Vitae

Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical on human dignity, challenges us to be "unconditionally pro-life.": "The case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform." (*Evangelium Vitae*, 27)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

"If...non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity to the dignity of the person." (CCC #2267)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Its [the death penalty] application is deeply flawed and can be irreversibly wrong, is prone to errors and is biased by factors such as race, the quality of legal representation and where the crime was committed." (*A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, USCCB, 2005)

Words of the Popes

Pope Francis: "Rendering justice' does not mean seeking punishment for its own sake, but ensuring that the basic purpose of all punishment is the rehabilitation of the offender." *World Congress Against the Death Penalty*, June 22, 2016

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: "Society's leaders should make every effort to eliminate the death penalty and to reform the penal system in a way that ensures respect for the prisoners' human dignity." *Benin, Africa*, Nov. 19, 2011

The States Speak

Innocence

- Nationally, over 160 people have been exonerated from death row.
- For every nine executions carried out in the United States, one person has been found to be innocent.

Racial Bias

- 76% of death row defendants have been executed for killing white victims, even though African--Americans make up about half of all homicide victims.

Criminalization of Mental Illness and Intellectual Disabilities

- A study in the *Hastings Law Journal* of recent executions found that "over half of the last one hundred executed offenders have been diagnosed with or displayed symptoms of mental illness."
- The Supreme Court banned the execution of those with intellectual disabilities but states have significantly deviated from accepted clinical methods for determining intellectual disability.

Overrepresentation of the Poor

- The majority of individuals on death row could not afford their own attorney. In many cases, the appointed attorneys are overworked, underpaid, or lacking the trial experience required for death penalty cases.

Costly Public Policy

- Multiple studies have shown the cost of trial sentencing, appeals and imprisonment to be much higher in capital cases versus life in prison without parole.

Geographic Basis

- 2% of all U.S. counties have produced 56% of the U.S. death row population



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