

OHIO'S DEATH PENALTY



The Facts

- 142 people currently on death row
- 56 executions since 1976
- 438 executions before 1976
- Jury decides the sentence
- Life without parole is a sentencing option
- Method of execution is lethal injection with a one-drug protocol
- 9 people released from death row based on evidence of innocence
- 21 people granted clemency

Constitutionality

The U.S. Supreme Court banned the execution of those with intellectual disabilities, but Ohio deviates from accepted clinical methods for determining intellectual disability. The Ohio legislative chambers have debated more than once legislation which would exclude from capital punishment those found with severe mental illness.

Geographical Discrepancies

Just 10 out of Ohio's 88 counties, accounting for about 48% of the population, make up almost 80% of the Ohioan indictments. County, not the severity of the crime, is the key determinant of who receives the death penalty.

Ohio's Bishops Stand Against Capital Punishment

In December of 2016, Bishop Daniel Thomas, Bishop of the Diocese of Toledo, wrote to the faithful of Ohio urging for the temporary moratorium to extend to a full abolition of the death penalty "I invite all Catholics and people of good will to take the following steps before executions resume in the State of Ohio: pray for the victims of crime, those facing execution, and those working in the criminal justice system; reach out to the families of those affected by violent crime by bringing Christ's love and compassion; learn about the Church's teaching on capital punishment and educate others in this vital area of concern; advocate for the end of the death penalty by contacting Governor John Kasich to urge clemency for all 139 [142] individuals on death row in the State of Ohio."

BOTCHED EXECUTIONS

Romell Broom was scheduled for execution in September 2009. The execution team spent 2 hours searching for a suitable vein for lethal injection. Broom even tried to insert the IV properly in a vein. This was one of three botched executions within a 4 year period.

MURDER VICTIMS' FAMILY MEMBERS

The death penalty does not bring loved ones back and any "closure" that comes from an execution is often fleeting and insufficient. Countless murder victims' family members oppose the death penalty because they recognize it does not bring true healing and merely fosters revenge.

The Church and State Speak

The Church Speaks

Catechism of the Catholic Church

"The Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that 'the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person' (Francis) and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide." (CCC 2267)

Evangelium Vitae

"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)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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)

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



**CATHOLIC
MOBILIZING
NETWORK**

**ENDING THE DEATH PENALTY.
PROMOTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE.**