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# It's Time to Choose a Higher Version of True Justice

## EXECUTING GRACE

How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us  
by Shane Claiborne

*"As a nation, how have we justified things like lynching, the death penalty, and the wicked glorification of death?"*

*"The answer is: the Bible.*

*"To be more accurate, the answer is the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, the U.S. Constitution, and all sorts of other holy and unholy stuff. When it comes to execution, few cultures do it more passionately than those compelled by their understanding of their religion." — pg. 43*

In the thought-provoking book **EXECUTING GRACE: How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us** (HarperOne; Paperback; June 7, 2016), social justice pioneer Shane Claiborne challenges Christians and non-Christians alike to abandon the death penalty once and for all and adopt a plan of true justice.

People are increasingly seeing the shocking realities about the death penalty. As a result, support for the death penalty is decreasing across the country. However, many Christians—who worship an executed, and resurrected, Messiah; who speak of mercy and forgiveness; who preach about Christ, Whose blood saved sinners—use the Bible to justify killing others for their sin.

There's a better way, Shane Claiborne says and he champions it in **EXECUTING GRACE**. This book not only shares the grim statistics of a faulty justice system, but also shares the faces and the stories of survivors of crime, victims' families, prisoners, pastors, prosecutors, the exonerated, and even executioners. In these conversations, Shane shows some of the strongest voices against the death penalty.

Weaving together the stories he has heard, church history, and biblical analysis, Claiborne makes a convincing and multifaceted case against the death penalty, pointing out:

- Why it is problematic to use scripture to justify violence and murder;
- How the death penalty violates the unanimous convictions of the early church;
- Issues relating to racial bias and bias against the poor;
- A poorly administered system where mistakes are routinely, and too easily, made in relation to sentencing, execution procedures, and even innocent people being executed.

With **EXECUTING GRACE**, Shane hopes to engage readers' minds and hearts, and to encourage people to find a way to think about justice, Jesus, and killing. He aims to build a movement of grace-driven abolitionists—people of faith and conscience who want to put an end to death forever.

Shane says, "Capital punishment offers us one version of justice.... Yet grace offers us another version of justice. Grace makes room for redemption. Grace offers us a vision for justice that is restorative, and dedicated to healing the wounds of injustice.... Sin and evil are terrible things. But grace gets the last word." In **EXECUTING GRACE**, Shane Claiborne calls for all of us to join him and stand together in choosing grace over fear and a higher vision of true justice.

**EXECUTING GRACE**  
**How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us**  
**By Shane Claiborne**  
**HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers**  
**On sale: June 7, 2016 • \$17.99 Paperback • ISBN: 9780062347374**  
**Also available as an eBook**  
**###**

## About Shane Claiborne, author of **EXECUTING GRACE**



**Shane Claiborne** is a prominent speaker, activist, and best-selling author. His adventures have taken him from the streets of Calcutta where he worked with Mother Teresa to the wealthy suburbs of Chicago where he served at the mega-church Willow Creek. As a peacemaker, he's traveled to some of the most troubled regions of the world – from Rwanda to the West Bank – and he's been on peace delegations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Shane heads up Red Letter Christians, a movement of Christians committed to living out the lifestyle prescribed in the Gospels. Shane is also the visionary founder of The Simple Way, an organization in inner city Philadelphia that has helped birth and connect radical faith communities around the world. He is married to Katie Jo, who also fell in love with the city (and with Shane). They were wed in St. Edwards church, the formerly abandoned cathedral into

which homeless families relocated in 1995, launching the beginning of The Simple Way community and a new phase of faith-based justice making.

Shane graduated from Eastern University and did graduate work at Princeton Seminary. In 2010, he received an Honorary Doctorate from Eastern.

Shane writes and travels extensively speaking about peacemaking, social justice, and Jesus. His previous books include *Jesus for President*, *Red Letter Revolution*, *Common Prayer*, *Follow me to Freedom*, *Jesus, Bombs and Ice Cream*, *Becoming the Answer to Our Prayers* – and his classic *The Irresistible Revolution*.

**<http://executinggrace.com>**

**Facebook:** ShaneClaiborne    **Twitter:** @ShaneClaiborne

## Praise for **EXECUTING GRACE**

"This compelling and thoughtful book is a must-read for people of faith who have in many ways been painfully silent about excessive punishment in America. Scripture, history and conviction make Shane Claiborne's writing essential for anyone serious about grace and mercy."

— **Bryan Stevenson**, author of *Just Mercy*

"Here is an invitation to build a world where we reject all forms of killing, both legal and illegal. It is a call to join a movement where grace gets the last word. Shane Claiborne's brilliant book reminds us that without forgiveness, there is no future."

— **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, author of *The Book of Forgiving*

"Claiborne masterfully weaves together theology, the history of America's death penalty, and firsthand accounts of its devastating effects. These pages are full of hope for a day when the death penalty is gone forever."

— **Sister Helen Prejean**, author of *Dead Man Walking*

"In this engaging and compelling book, Shane Claiborne calls us—with his characteristic blend of heart and humor, faith and activism, stories and scripture—to recognize that 'grace offers us a vision for justice that is restorative, and dedicated to healing the wounds of injustice,' while affirming 'the grace thing is hard work' and so requires faith.... You will be moved, informed and inspired by Shane's invitation to the hard, faith-filled work of the 'grace thing' our God of love and justice intends."

— **Marian Wright Edelman**, activist and founder of the Children's Defense Fund

"Executing Grace may be the best book on the death penalty."

— **David P. Gushee**, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics and Director of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Mercer University

"In *Executing Grace*, Shane Claiborne clearly and passionately argues that Christians must elevate grace and mercy over revenge. He persuasively makes the deep connection between racial injustice and the death penalty and demonstrates the clear need for Christians to stand up against both."

— **Jim Wallis**, founder and Editor of *Sojourners*

"Executing Grace is about remembering our humanity in the midst of a culture of death. With no shortcuts or easy answers Shane has called us to wrestle with capital punishment. An entire generation of evangelicals will find in this work the radical grip of grace."

— **Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero**, President of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition

"Executing Grace goes far in helping make Christ central to our conversation about the death penalty."

— **Christianity Today**

"Claiborne takes the reader on a moral journey that's often hard to undertake on one's own.... Claiborne's latest is a timely release as an increasing number of U.S. states move to more effective forms of justice."

— **Publishers Weekly STARRED review**

"In this often moving and unsettling book, Claiborne provides a meaningful contribution to a deeply fraught topic."

— **Kirkus Reviews**

# Q&A with Shane Claiborne, author of **EXECUTING GRACE**

## Book

### 1. In *Executing Grace*, you admit you have an agenda. What is that agenda?

To be fully transparent -- I want to abolish the death penalty. I realize that the death penalty has succeeded in America not in spite of Christians, but because of us. And it's time to change that. I want to see faith leaders, Christians, and other people of conscience, make a clarion call to end the death penalty. But it is also important to me that this mission is seen, not as a betrayal of Scripture or of our faith, but as a deeply committed conviction rooted in Scripture and our faith.

### 2. The subtitle of this book reads "*How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us*". Please explain.

I got an email that said, "How can God be against the death penalty when God used it to save the world?" How we understand Jesus's death – his execution – is a critical question. And it has very much to do with the character of God. I believe God is love, as Scripture says. And the world will know we are Christians by our love.

Some ways of understanding the cross are that God had a gun pointed at humanity, and then turned away from us and killed Jesus. I believe Jesus is doing something much deeper on the cross. Jesus is exposing the violence and evil we are all capable of, and triumphing over it in love, forgiving even those who kill him. Jesus is the water poured on the electric chair to short-circuit the whole system of death. Jesus is also the most profound act of divine solidarity.

Seeing Jesus as a victim of violence should give us a renewed solidarity with all victims of violence—both victims of violent crime, and victims of state-sanctioned murder. Jesus should make all of us who seek to follow him the greatest adversaries of violence and execution, not the people who justify it.

## Stories

### 3. What has been the most haunting death penalty case you've discovered, and why?

It's difficult to pinpoint the most haunting case, especially when we have now seen around 160 people exonerated after proving they were innocent of the crimes they were convicted of. It's hard to imagine what it is like to spend twenty or thirty years in prison for a crime you had nothing to do with. And that is exactly the case for folks like my friend Curtis McCarty, whose story I tell in the book. He was convicted based on faulty evidence and spent the majority of his adult life in prison for a crime he had nothing to do with. But there are other cases, where race is a major factor, like Timothy Tyrone Foster, an African-American man sentenced to death by an all-white jury, or Duane Buck sentenced to death in Texas in a case where an expert witness suggested that black folks are more likely to be violent than white folks. The more I research, and perhaps even more importantly, the more I talk with folks on the front lines of the death penalty, the more I am haunted by what I see.

### 4. Why do these stories have so much power?

The stories are powerful and so important because in the end we are not talking about an "issue." We're talking about people – people made in the image of God. We must be concerned about the victims of violent crime, which is why I begin the book telling stories about victims who are against the death penalty – seeing that it only creates a new set of victims. Of course we think of those who were wrongly convicted. For every nine executions, one person has been exonerated after proving their innocence.

## Q&A with Shane Claiborne (cont.)

5. **Can you share one of the many personal stories included in the book that you find has the most impact on people when they hear it?**

One of the powerful stories in the book is about my friend Billy Neal Moore. He came back from the Vietnam War, deeply troubled. Among other things he needed money, and he and an army buddy made a bad decision and tried to rob a house. The homeowner ended up dying. Billy had never had a criminal record, and was haunted by what happened. He turned himself in and faced the death penalty, which was fine with him. He was so grieved by what he had done that he wanted to kill himself – in fact, he tried to in prison. He said if he could push the button on his on execution he would. But then there was an interruption – grace.

The family of the man killed reached out to Billy Neal Moore. They said essentially, *We hate what you did, you took someone we love deeply away from us.* But then they continued: *But we are Christians. We believe in grace, and forgiveness, and a God who redeems sinners.* Billy committed his life to Christ, and that family became his family. They were the most vigilant voices against the death penalty, constantly pleading for Billy's life to be spared. In a very rare move, not only was his life spared, but Billy was released from prison. Today he is a pastor. That's the miracle of grace.

### Victims

6. **You mention that one of the first questions you are asked when you write or speak about the death penalty is “What about the victims?” How do you answer that?**

We must insist in justice for the victims of violence. Many victims of violent crimes have taught me that the death penalty is not the best form of justice. The death penalty creates a whole new set of victims. When we execute, we mirror the very violence we hope to denounce. I have found that some of the family members who have managed to see the offender executed are still not healed. Often, they are still held hostage to the crime, to fear, and to hatred. On the other hand, some of the most stunning examples of healing I've ever seen are murder victim's family members who have decided against execution and who are convinced that forgiveness, reconciliation, and mercy are the best way forward.

7. **You make the point that one of the most unchecked assumptions in our society is that the victims of murder are all in favor of the death penalty. What does this mean for victims' family members who oppose execution as a form of justice?**

When victims' family members are against the death penalty, they can feel powerless, which is terribly sad since violent crime already leaves them feeling like they have no control over the situation. Victims' family members who are for the death penalty have their voices amplified. However, when victims' family members are against the death penalty, they are often silenced. In the book, I even document cases where victims' family members have been given gag orders or threatened with obstruction of justice when they voice opposition to the death penalty. There are even cases where courts have ruled that if family members are not in favor of the death penalty then they are not true victims.

8. **Have you had a loved one killed? If so, how did it affect your view on the death penalty?**

I have not had a family member killed, but I have worked closely with three different organizations of family members of murder victims. For many reasons, they've come to the conclusion that execution is not the solution. Many of them are deeply committed people of faith, and many of their stories are sprinkled throughout the book. I am also sharing some of the royalties from the book with these groups.

## Statistics

### 9. Why do you think most death penalty cases—and executions—are in Southern states?

The contemporary practice of the death penalty cannot be divorced from our history of slavery and racism. As Connecticut's Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional in 2015, the court's treatise made this point: "The 13 states that comprised the Confederacy have carried out more than 75 percent of the nation's executions over the last four decades."

The states where people were being lynched 100 years ago are precisely the states where people, and an inordinate percentage of people of color, are being executed today. To this day, one of the biggest predictors of who gets executed is the race of the victim and the resources of the defendant. We are not executing the worst of the worst but the poorest of the poor... and especially people of color.

The roots of the death penalty are sunk deep in the horrific history of lynching. As lynchings decreased, legal executions increased. Two-thirds of those executed in the 1930s were black. As African Americans fell to 22 percent of the South's population by 1950, they made up 75 percent of the executions. And today, even though African Americans make up only 13 percent of the nation's population, 42 percent of death row is black, and 34 percent of those executed since 1976 have been black.

## Christianity

### 10. What do you say to someone who uses a particular passage from scripture (for example, "an eye for an eye") to support using the death penalty as a form of justice?

It is impossible to try and reconcile the biblical death penalty in the Old Testament with the contemporary practice of the death penalty in America. For starters, there are over 30 death-worthy crimes including working on the Sabbath, witchcraft, adultery, and disobeying your parents. And, as a Christian, there is the nagging problem of Jesus. I find it impossible to justify the death penalty with Jesus, who said "blessed are the merciful for you will be shown mercy." Even though we have heard it said "an eye for an eye", Jesus teaches us another way, a better form of justice.

### 11. If the Bible does not support the death penalty as so many Christians believe, how do you explain how so many got this wrong?

It is disturbing to see that where Christians have been most concentrated is where the death penalty has thrived – the Bible Belt has become the death belt. Many evangelical Christians have focused on the Old Testament or certain ways of interpreting Paul's writing that justify the death penalty. It raises many important questions about how we read Scripture and how we interpret the death of Jesus.

Ironically, it's Christians – not Jewish people – who use the Hebrew law to justify the death penalty. Even though there were thirty death-worthy crimes in the Old Testament, the Jewish community didn't like execution and did away with the death penalty in practice hundreds of years ago.

### In *Executing Grace*, you mention what you consider to be the greatest obstacle for pro-death penalty Christians. What is it?

Jesus is the nagging problem for pro-death-penalty Christians. It's hard to reconcile Jesus with capital punishment. Jesus said things like, "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy" and "Inasmuch as you forgive, you will be forgiven". When confronted with the death penalty, Jesus said, "You have heard it said 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I tell you..." and he presented a new take on justice.

In a very concrete instance of a woman caught in adultery (which was a capital crime), Jesus told the crowd of men seeking justice, "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone." And the men walked away. The only one with any right to throw a stone has no desire. Jesus shows us that no one is above reproach, and no one is beyond redemption. There is a better way, and Jesus shows us that way.

# Q&A with Shane Claiborne (cont.)

## Message

### 12. How do you go about changing someone's deeply held convictions?

I don't know many people who get 'argued' into a new way of thinking. I 'story' people in. The stories and friendships with the people in these stories have changed me, and I watch them change others. I also know that the great Story of Jesus is so beautiful, and has so much power – especially as we realize Jesus didn't come for people who have it all together. Jesus came to heal, redeem, and save sick people, sinners. In his own words (Mark 2:17): "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

### 13. Are you hopeful that we can really end the death penalty in the near future?

I am very hopeful.

Executions and death sentences are the lowest they've been in decades. Last year only six states executed, and in 2016, all but two executions have been in two states (Texas and Georgia). Almost every year, a new state permanently abolishes the death penalty.

We're also seeing many conservative and evangelical voices rising to the occasion. Entire coalitions of Christians are now explicitly coming out against the death penalty. What's more—and this is very important – young people, and young Christians in particular are against the death penalty. One study has shown 80 percent of millennial Christians are against the death penalty. For the first time in recent history, a majority of Americans are against the death penalty when presented with alternatives like life in prison.

I am very hopeful that we are going to make death penalty history in the US. Then we can work on the rest of the world. When it comes to executing our own citizens, we are in the top five countries – and this is the company we keep: China, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran.

We can do better than killing to show that killing is wrong.

## Issues

- The Bible Belt overlaps perfectly with the areas where most executions take place.
- Most executions take place in the same areas where lynchings most commonly occurred.
- Prison staff involved in executions are traumatized by what they do.
- The death certificates for executed inmates list the cause of death as "legal murder."
- Victims and family members of victims are often treated as "enemies of the court" when they oppose the death penalty for the offender.
- "An eye for an eye" should not be seen as supporting the death penalty.
- God supports life and grace and opposes justifications for the death penalty.
- Jesus, an executed felon himself, would not want his followers to execute others.
- In this democratic government the practice of the death penalty corrodes all of our souls.



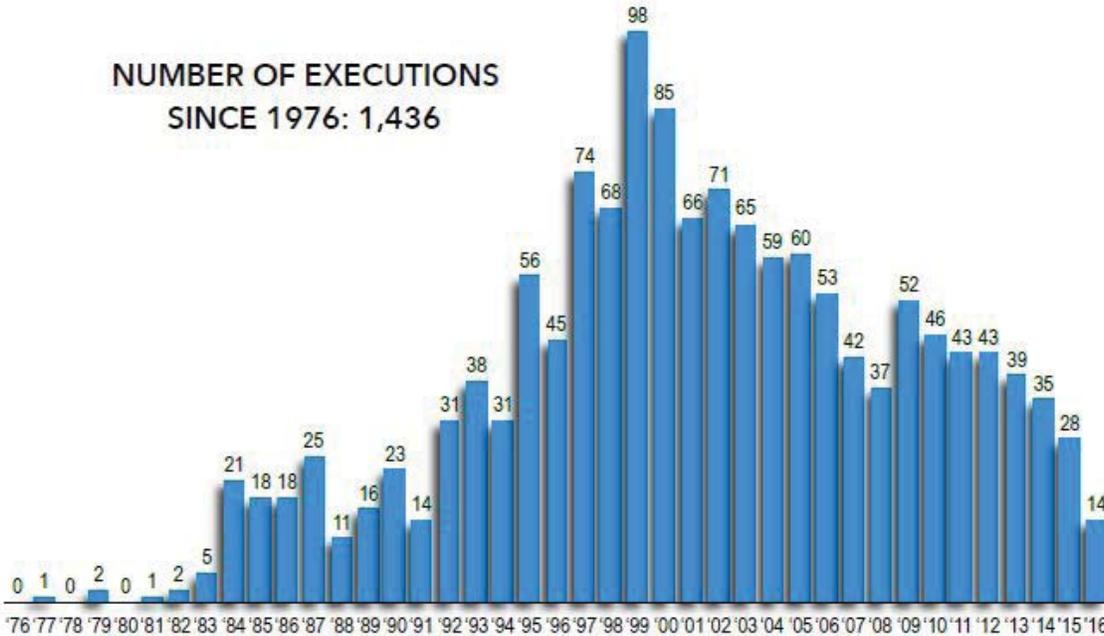
# DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER

## Facts about the Death Penalty

1015 18th St. NW, Suite 704  
 Washington, DC 20036  
[www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)  
[dpic@deathpenaltyinfo.org](mailto:dpic@deathpenaltyinfo.org)  
 @DPInfoCtr  
[facebook.com/DeathPenaltyInfo](https://facebook.com/DeathPenaltyInfo)

Updated: May 12, 2016

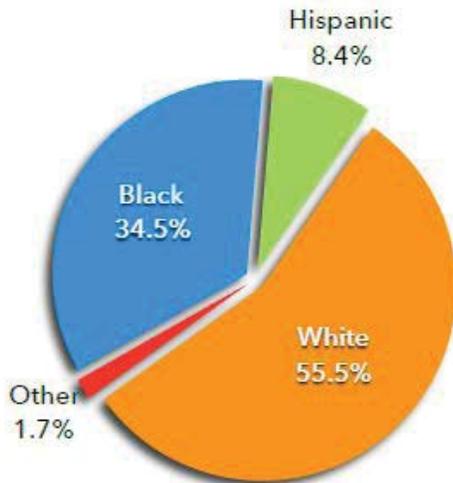
### NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976: 1,436



#### DEATH PENALTY STATES (31)

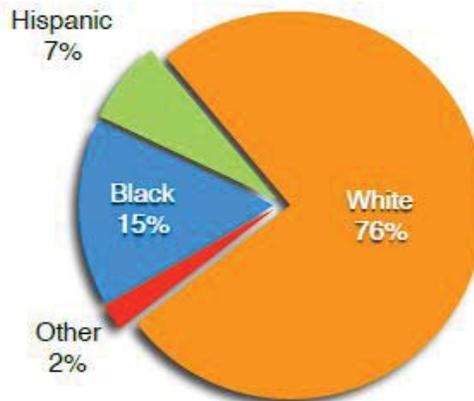
- Alabama
- Arizona
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- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wyoming

#### RACE OF DEFENDANTS EXECUTED



- White: 797
- Black: 495
- Hispanic: 120
- Other: 24

#### RACE OF VICTIMS IN DEATH PENALTY CASES



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

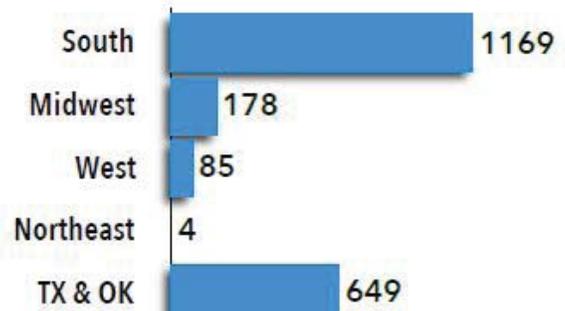
#### NON-DEATH PENALTY STATES (19)

- Alaska
  - Connecticut
  - Hawaii
  - Illinois
  - Iowa
  - Maine
  - Maryland
  - Massachusetts
  - Michigan
  - Minnesota
  - Nebraska\*
  - New Jersey
  - New Mexico\*\*
  - New York
  - North Dakota
  - Rhode Island
  - Vermont
  - West Virginia
  - Wisconsin
  - District of Columbia
- \*A petition to suspend the repeal bill has been submitted, the issue will be on the November ballot.  
 \*\*Inmates remain on death row.

## EXECUTIONS BY STATE SINCE 1976

State	Tot	2015	2016	State	Tot	2015	2016	State	Tot	2015	2016
TX	537	13	6	AR	27	0	0	PA	3	0	0
OK	112	1	0	MS	21	0	0	KY	3	0	0
VA	111	1	0	IN	20	0	0	MT	3	0	0
FL	92	2	1	DE	16	0	0	US GOVT	3	0	0
MO	87	6	1	CA	13	0	0	ID	3	0	0
GA	65	5	5	IL	12	0	0	SD	3	0	0
AL	57	0	1	NV	12	0	0	OR	2	0	0
OH	53	0	0	UT	7	0	0	NM	1	0	0
NC	43	0	0	TN	6	0	0	CO	1	0	0
SC	43	0	0	MD	5	0	0	WY	1	0	0
AZ	37	0	0	WA	5	0	0	CT	1	0	0
LA	28	0	0	NE	3	0	0				

## EXECUTIONS BY REGION\*



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

## DEATH SENTENCING

The number of death sentences per year has dropped dramatically since 1999.

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Sentences	295	279	223	153	166	151	138	140	123	126	120	118	114	85	82	83	73	49

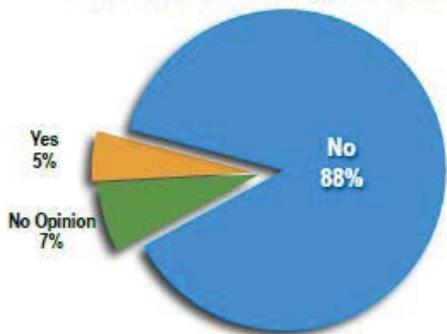
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics: "Capital Punishment, 2013." 2014 figure from DPIC research.

## 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

Do executions lower homicide rates?



- 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).
- Consistent with previous years, the 2014 FBI Uniform Crime Report showed that **the South had the highest murder rate. The South accounts for over 80% of executions.** The Northeast, which has less than 1% of all executions, had lowest murder rate.

- 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. (Radelet & Lacrook, 2009)

Murder Rates per 100,000 (2014)



## EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976 BY METHOD USED

1261	Lethal Injection	34 states plus the US government use lethal injection as their primary method. Some states utilizing lethal injection have other methods available as backups. Though New Mexico and Connecticut have abolished the death penalty, their laws were not retroactive, leaving prisoners on the states' death rows and their lethal injection protocols intact.
158	Electrocution	
11	Gas Chamber	
3	Hanging	
3	Firing Squad	

## JUVENILES

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

## WOMEN

- There were 56 women on death row as of Dec. 31, 2014. This constitutes less than 2% of the total death row population. (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Jan. 1, 2015). 16 women have been executed since 1976.

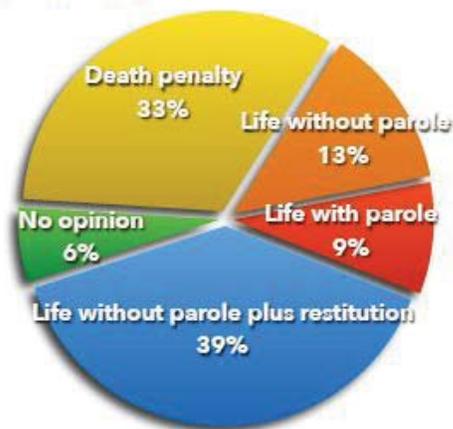
## FINANCIAL FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

- 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 new 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).
- In Maryland, an average death penalty case resulting in a death sentence costs approximately \$3 million. The eventual costs to Maryland taxpayers for cases pursued 1978-1999 will be \$186 million. Five executions have resulted. (Urban Institute, 2008).
- 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).

## PUBLIC OPINION AND THE DEATH PENALTY

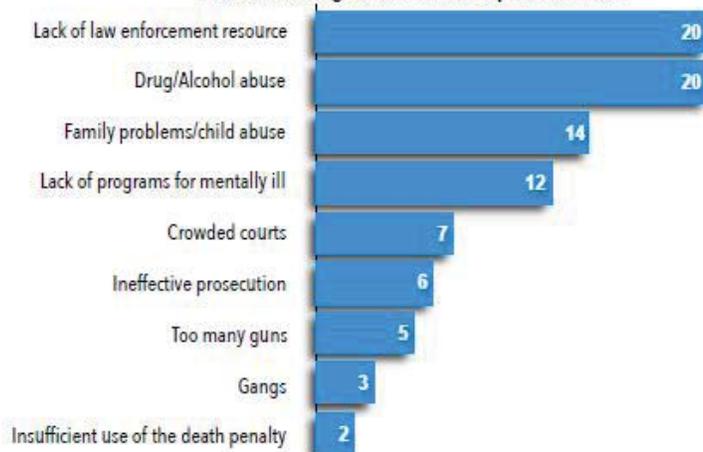
### Support for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

- 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?

Percent Ranking Item as One of Top Two or Three



- 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.

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

- "The Death Penalty in 2015: Year-End Report" (December 2015)
- "Battle Scars: Military Veterans and the Death Penalty"
- "The 2% Death Penalty: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases at Enormous Costs to All" (October 2013)
- "The Death Penalty in 2013: Year-End Report" (December 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)
- "International Perspectives on the Death Penalty: A Costly Isolation for the U.S." (1999)
- "The Death Penalty in Black & White: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Decides" (1998)
- "Innocence and the Death Penalty: The Increasing Danger of Executing the Innocent" (1997)

# What People Can Do to **End the Death Penalty**

- **Put a face on the “issue.”**  
Tell stories. Arguments rarely change people’s minds, but stories have the power to change minds and hearts.
- **Use the facts.**  
There is a lot of misinformation out there about the death penalty as cost-efficient, as a deterrent to crime, as an effective way to bring closure to victims. Often the more people learn about the death penalty the more troubled they are by our practice of it.
- **Make subversive friendships.**  
If you lean liberal, build some friendships with the growing movement of conservatives concerned about the death penalty, and vice versa. Give people a chance to change their minds.
- **Amplify the voices of murder victims’ family members who are against the death penalty.**  
They have so much credibility, and it debunks the idea that to be anti-execution means you are anti-victim.
- **Join your local abolition movement.**  
There are local movements around the country that have specific strategies for repeal that are unique to each state. We’ve provided a list here and on our site.

## Organizations and Groups Working for **Death Penalty Alternatives**

- **90 Million Strong**  
<http://www.90millionstrong.org>
- **Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty**  
<http://conservativesconcerned.org>
- **Equal Justice Initiative**  
<http://www.eji.org>
- **Equal Justice USA**  
<http://ejusa.org>
- **Innocence Project**  
<http://www.innocenceproject.org>
- **Journey of Hope . . . from Violence to Healing**  
<https://www.journeyofhope.org>
- **Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation (MVFR)**  
<http://www.mvfr.org>
- **National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty**  
<http://www.ncadp.org>
- **People of Faith Against the Death Penalty**  
<http://www.pfadp.org>
- **Witness to Innocence**  
<http://www.witnesstoinnocence.org>