



**FACTS TO
HELP END
THE DEATH
PENALTY**

**EACH OF THESE FACTS ADDRESS
A COMMON MISPERCEPTION
USE THEM to STIMULATE
CIVIL DIALOGUE to ADVANCE
PUBLIC WILL for ABOLITION**

1. **The death penalty is not a deterrent to violent crime.** Consistent with previous years, the 2010 FBI Uniform Crime Report showed that the South had the highest murder rate and accounts for over 80% of executions. The Northeast & West have the lowest murder rates and hold less than 1% of all executions.
2. **The death penalty costs more than life imprisonment.** It costs taxpayers from \$2 to \$5 million per death sentence for the *trials and appeals*. Life in prison averages \$1 million (40 years at \$25,000/year). Louisiana State Attorney General, & former District Attorney, says that he can try a second-degree murder case for \$15,000-20,000 instead of \$250,000 for a death penalty trial.
3. **Innocent people get executed.** Of 350 persons *mistakenly convicted* of potentially capital crimes, 139 were sentenced to death, and **23 were actually executed**. Researchers say that there are probably many more cases not yet identified. (Stanford Law Review study of 1900 to 1985) **142** people have been *exonerated* after years on death rows. **10 of these are from Oklahoma.**
4. **The death penalty perpetuates violent crime.** As a symbol of "being tough on crime," the death penalty helps politicians get elected. Since it does not reduce violent crime, it wastes resources. States that have abolished the death penalty can redirect the money saved into programs that actually reduce violent crime.
5. **Racism #1:** Minority defendants are more likely than white defendants to be sentenced to death for the same crimes. Research into sentencing patterns shows that blacks are three to four times as likely to be sentenced to death as whites charged in similar cases.
6. **Racism #2:** The death penalty punishes primarily those who kill whites. Although *homicide victims* are *six times* more likely to be *black* than white, **77 percent** of death penalty cases involve *white victims*..
7. **Poor people are executed much more often than wealthy murderers.** Over 99% of the people on death row are indigent, according to one U.S. Appeals Court judge. Persons of all income levels commit murder, but poor people are the primary recipients of the death penalty.
8. **Mentally ill people are executed.** Even though the law forbids the execution of those who are mentally ill, experience shows that the determination of sanity is generally made after very limited contact with the accused, often by psychiatrists employed by the prosecution. Inevitably, some who are ill are declared "sane," and fit for execution.
9. **Inconsistent sentencing. Only one out of 100 convicted of murder is sentenced to death.** Those sentenced to death are not necessarily those whose crimes are the worst - rather, they tend to be the poor, people of color, and those whose victims are white.
10. **Public support for the death penalty is decreasing.** When offered a range of sentencing options, respondents in several polls have shown a preference for life imprisonment rather than execution.
11. **Many Victims' families oppose the death penalty.** Connecticut's successful campaign to abolish the death penalty was led by family members of murder victims with statements like this, "***If we are serious about caring for victims, we will repeal the death penalty. It only prolongs pain for families as it inevitably drags out the legal process and leaves families in limbo waiting for an execution that may never come.***"
12. **Only the U.S. of all industrialized nations & western democracies still use the death penalty** since South Africa has renounced it and the USSR no longer exists.