

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION MOMENTUM

A CATHOLIC CALL TO ACTION

“To oppose the death penalty is not to be ‘soft on crime.’ Rather, it is to be strong on the dignity of life.”

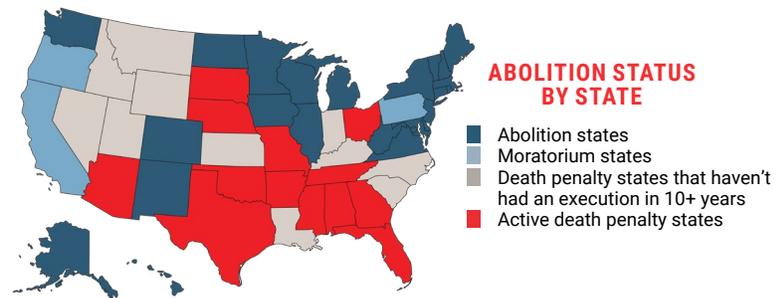
(Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane)

As a global Church, we have been called to educate, advocate, and pray for the abolition of capital punishment. **You can take part in this holy work.** Find out how you can join Catholic Mobilizing Network to end the death penalty once and for all: catholicmobilizing.org

REPEALS AND MORATORIA

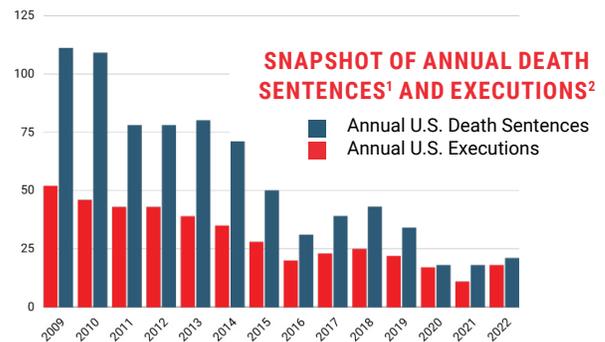
STATE: As of September 2023, 23 states have abolished the death penalty and three others are under governor-declared moratoriums. More than two-thirds of U.S. states — 37 out of 50 — have either outlawed capital punishment or have not carried out an execution in at least 10 years.

FEDERAL: President Biden’s Department of Justice declared an official moratorium on federal executions in July 2021. However, given that the Trump administration overrode a 17-year “de facto” moratorium in order to resume federal executions in 2020, advocates are pushing for stronger action from the Biden administration to dismantle the federal death penalty. Learn more: catholicmobilizing.org/federal-death-penalty-information



DECLINING EXECUTIONS AND DEATH SENTENCES

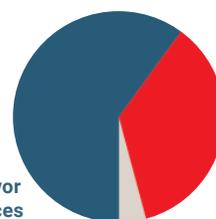
The past several decades have shown a nationwide decline in the use of capital punishment. The year 2022 marked the eighth consecutive year with fewer than 30 executions and 50 new death sentences.



WANING PUBLIC SUPPORT

The death penalty is falling out of favor among Americans, with Catholics opposing the practice at a higher rate than the general public.

60% Americans Favor Alternative Sentences



A higher percentage of Americans oppose capital punishment than at any other time in the modern history of the U.S. death penalty.³

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE

"The death penalty is inadmissible because it is an 'attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person' and [the Church] works with determination for its abolition worldwide." (*Catholic Catechism 2267*)

INNOCENCE

Since 1973, at least 195 innocent people in the U.S. have been exonerated from death row.⁴



For every 9 people executed in the U.S., one person on death row has been exonerated.

RACIAL BIAS

People of color are disproportionately represented on death row, especially those convicted of killing white victims.

Persons Executed for Black/White Interracial Murders in the U.S. Since 1976²



VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The death penalty targets vulnerable populations, including those who are poor and those who experience mental illness, intellectual disability, brain damage, and/or chronic trauma.

100%

Every person executed in 2020 had one or more significant mental or emotional impairments or was under age 21 at the time of the crime for which they were executed.⁵

ARBITRARINESS

The U.S. death penalty is geographically arbitrary, with over half of the executions carried out since 1976 originating in just 2% of American counties.⁶

2% of U.S. Counties



56% of U.S. Death Row



COST

State-based studies consistently find that the death penalty is more expensive than alternative sentences such as life without parole.



A 2011 study in California showed death penalty cases are 20 times more expensive than other comparable cases.⁷

1. "Death sentences in the United States since 1977." Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/sentencing-data/death-sentences-in-the-united-states-from-1977-by-state-and-by-year

2. "Execution Database." Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database.

3. "Americans Now Support Life in Prison Over Death Penalty." Gallup, news.gallup.com/poll/268514/americans-support-life-prison-death-penalty.aspx

4. "Innocence." Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/innocence

5. "The Death Penalty in 2020: Year End Report." Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/dpic-reports/dpic-year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2020-year-end-report

6. Dieter, Richard C. Death Penalty Information Center, 2013, p. 10, *The 2% Death Penalty: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases At Enormous Costs to All.*

7. "California Cost Study 2011." Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/stories/california-cost-study-2011