

# A Stark Look at the Death Penalty

By [Global Research News](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)



# A STARK LOOK AT THE DEATH PENALTY

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT THROUGH THE AGES

**19TH CENTURY B.C.**  
King Hammurabi of Babylonia codifies the death penalty for 25 different crimes. Murders in 1/3 of all crimes.

**15TH CENTURY B.C.**  
The first death sentence recorded in Egypt.

**1609-1740**  
Henry VIII of England sends 128 nobles to the guillotine during his reign.

**1609**  
The first American execution is recorded when Captain George Kendall of the Jamestown Colony is executed in Jamestown.

**1794 B.C.**  
The Roman Code of Draco makes death the penalty for every crime committed.

**738 A.D.**  
Jesus is crucified outside of Jerusalem.

**1972**  
The Supreme Court nullifies the death penalty nationwide for four years. It is reinstated in 1976, but only in 36 states. In 1997, the majority support for retaining both capital punishment in the U.S. drops to 54 percent.

**1976**  
The U.S. Supreme Court allows capital punishment again during the Rehnquist Court (1981-1994). It is followed by a dramatic decline in the number of death row inmates between 1987 and 1997.

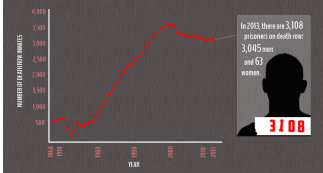
**1976**  
U.S. capital punishment is again being used nationwide, following the Supreme Court's decision in the 1970s to allow states to reinstate execution between 1967 and 1976.

## IN 2013, 32 STATES ALLOW THE DEATH PENALTY

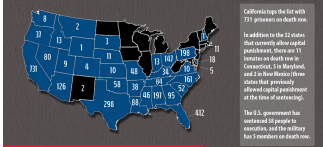
Alabama	Arkansas	Florida	Georgia	Indiana	Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Mississippi	Missouri	Oklahoma	Texas	Virginia
Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama
Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama

*and the U.S. government and the federal courts.*

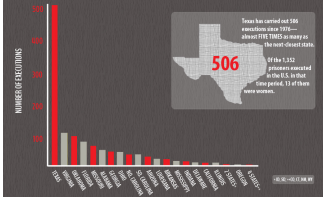
## THE NUMBER OF DEATH ROW INMATES HAS SKYROCKETED



## DEATH ROW INMATES PER STATE



## SINCE 1976, THE U.S. HAS EXECUTED 1,352 PEOPLE



## METHODS OF EXECUTION



## THE COSTS OF EXECUTION ARE ASTRONOMICAL

Take California, for example, where death penalty costs have totaled **\$4.6 billion** since 1978.

- \$1.94 billion in trial and trial costs
- \$525 million in Attorney General's and District Attorney's Fees
- \$175 million in State of California's costs
- \$1 billion in execution costs

**\$171 million**  
The amount spent by the State of California each year on the death penalty and death row inmates.

**\$11.5 million**  
The cost of the state's 1,352 prisoners executed in the U.S. in that time period, 11 of them were women.

**\$90,000**  
The amount of cost of carrying out a death row. With 13 prisoners on the state's death row, that's more than \$60 million annually.

**\$25 million**  
Some states have spent less than \$25 million on capital punishment. Some states have spent more than \$25 million.

## SOMETIMES, THE INNOCENT ARE CONVICTED

**130** WRONGLY CONVICTED DEATH ROW PRISONERS HAVE BEEN SET FREE IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1976.

**BUT HOW CAN THE WRONG PERSON END UP BEHIND BARS?**

- Constitutional rights
- Inadequate legal representation
- Police and prosecutorial misfeasance
- Racial prejudice
- Witness unreliability

## THERE ARE SERIOUS MORAL, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO THE DEATH PENALTY, AND NO EASY ANSWERS

- Is the purpose of the death penalty to remove from society someone who would commit more harm?
- Is a death-row inmate or condemned because they are incapable of rehabilitation?
- Will the death penalty deter others from committing a murder?
- Is the purpose of the death penalty to provide commensurate punishment for a criminal's actions?
- Is the death penalty to serve as retribution for victims' families?

## LOTS TO CONSIDER, AND THESE DEATH PENALTY MOVIES PROVIDE EVEN MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT.



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alt="Death Penalty" width="500" border="0" /></a><br

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href="http://www.criminaljusticedegreehub.com/">CriminalJusticeDegreeHub.com</a>**Tim  
eline**

18th Century, BC: the Code of King Hammurabi of Babylon codified the death penalty for 25 different crimes.

FACT: Murder was not one of them.

16th Century, B.C.: first death sentence historically recorded in Egypt.

The 7th Century BC: Draconian Code of Athens made death the penalty for every crime committed. Since then, draconian has come to refer to similarly unforgiving rules or laws.

399 BC: Greek philosopher Socrates was found guilty of "refusing to recognize the gods recognized by the state" and "corrupting the youth." and was sentenced to drink poison.

29 A.D. Jesus was crucified outside of Jerusalem.

FACT: [You think Texas is tough?] Under Henry VIII of England, as many as 72,000 people were executed, mostly by hanging, the standard method of execution at the time.

#1: The first recorded execution in America took place in 1608, and was that of Captain George Kendall in the Jamestown colony of Virginia, who was convicted of treason.

1930s: The Depression era in the U.S. saw a peak in executions (an average of 160 per year), was followed by a dramatic decrease in the 1950s and 1960s. No executions occurred in the US between 1967 and 1976.

1972: the Supreme Court effectively nullified the death penalty, and converted the death sentences of hundreds of death row inmates to life in prison.

1976: another Supreme Court ruling found capital punishment to be Constitutional.

### U.S. Statistics

DEATH PENALTY STATES (32)

Alabama

Arizona

Arkansas

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

Washington

Wyoming

U.S. Gov't: the Military

13 women have been executed in the U.S. since 1976.

### **Executions since 1976 by Method Used**

Lethal Injection - 1177

Electrocution - 158

Gas Chamber - 11

Hanging - 3

Firing Squad - 3

### **Costs:**

Cost of the death penalty in California has totaled over \$4 billion since 1978:

\$1.94 billion-Pre-Trial and Trial Costs

\$925 million-Automatic Appeals and State Habeas Corpus Petitions

\$775 million-Federal Habeas Corpus Appeals

\$1 billion-Costs of Incarceration

\$186 million: Estimation of the extra costs to taxpayers in the state of Maryland alone, for death penalty cases prosecuted between 1978 and 1999. Based on the 5 executions carried out in the state, this translates to a cost of \$37 million per execution.

California was spending \$137 million per year on the death penalty, whereas they were reported to only spend \$90 million annually in 1988. It was estimated that a system that sentenced the same inmates to a punishment of life without parole would cost only \$11.5 million per year.

\$90,000: annual cost of confining an inmate to death row in California. With 700 inmates currently on death row in California, that comes to \$63 million a year.

WOW: Since the number of executions in California has averaged less than one every two years since the death penalty was reinstated in 1977, the cost for each execution is over \$250 million.

In 1988, it was estimated that the costs of the death penalty in Florida were \$3.2 million per execution. Based on the 44 executions carried out in Florida from 1976 to 2000, that comes to \$24 million per execution.

Sometimes the innocent are set free:

130: Since 1973, the number of people that have been released from death rows throughout the country due to evidence of their wrongful convictions.

## **Factors leading to wrongful convictions include:**

Inadequate legal representation  
Police and prosecutorial misconduct  
Perjured testimony and mistaken eyewitness testimony  
Racial prejudice  
Jailhouse “snitch” testimony  
Suppression and/or misinterpretation of mitigating evidence  
Community/political pressure to solve a case

## **What is the purpose of a death penalty (thoughts to ponder)**

Is the purpose of the death penalty to remove from society someone who would cause more harm?

Is the purpose to remove from society someone who is incapable of rehabilitation?

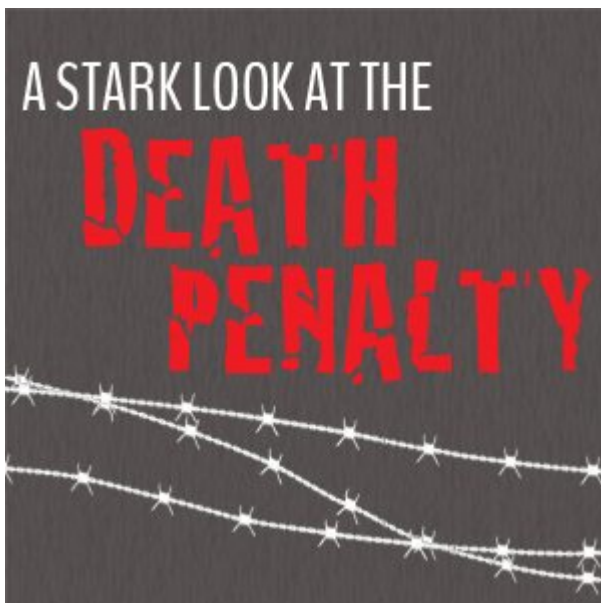
Is the purpose of the death penalty to deter others from committing murder?

Is the purpose of the death penalty to punish the criminal?

Is the purpose of the death penalty to take retribution on behalf of the victim?

## **10 Best Death Penalty Movies**

“Paths of Glory” (1957)  
“The Thin Blue Line” (1988)  
“The Green Mile” (1999)  
“Pierrepont: The Last Hangman” (2005)  
“Capote” (2005)  
“Dead Man Walking” (1995)  
“The Star Chamber” (1983)  
“Shocker” (1989)  
“True Crime” (1999)  
“The Life of David Gale” (2003)



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