

### **Arguments For Capital Punishment**

1. Because they have taken the life of another those who commit murder, have forfeited their own right to life.
2. Capital punishment is a just form of retribution, expressing and reinforcing the moral indignation of the victim's relatives and of law-abiding citizens in general.
  - a. The death penalty is not going to bring the victim back to his or her family, but it will at least give the grieving family, community and friends much needed closure
3. The biblical sanction "an eye of an eye." or a fair punishment demands a similar response to the crime itself
4. Capital punishment has a uniquely potent deterrent effect on potentially violent offenders for whom the threat of imprisonment is not a sufficient restraint
  - a. Proponents point to studies that have tracked the effects of the death penalty over a few years and have found it is highly effective when deterring crime.
5. It is possible to fashion laws and procedures that ensure that only those who are really deserving of death are executed.
6. While mistakes can and have been made the fact that there must be a unanimous jury of twelve of the accused peers to vote on the death penalty for it to be upheld is a basic safeguard
  - a. The rare possibility of mistake is a price worth paying for society being able to protect itself
7. The cost associated with the death penalty are high due to the cost of decades of appeals before the inmate will even make it to the death chamber.
  - a. On the other hand, the cost of life in prison can be astronomical as well.
8. The death penalty is not racially biased. Current % of those on death row
  - Black - 41.29%
  - Latino - 13.5%
  - White - 42.37%

## **Arguments Against Capital Punishment**

1. Everyone has an inalienable human right to life, even those who commit murder
  - a. The Declaration of Independence gives three examples of inalienable rights, in the well-known phrase, "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.
  - b. Sentencing a person to death and executing them violates the right to Life
2. Death constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment," which is prohibited by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
  - a. The various means used by the state to kill a criminal, including lethal injection are cruel as shown by numerous examples
3. Only God should create and destroy life
  - a. Many Christians believe that God commanded "Thou shalt not kill" and that this is a clear instruction with no exceptions
  - b. This argument is used to oppose abortion and euthanasia, so it should also apply when it comes to Capital Punishment
4. If killing is immoral, by legitimizing the very behavior that the law seeks to repress, namely killing, capital punishment is counterproductive in the moral message it conveys.
5. The death penalty is used disproportionately against the poor, who cannot afford expensive legal counsel, as well as against racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.
6. The death penalty is applied arbitrarily and inconsistently.
7. A rehabilitated criminal can make a morally valuable contribution to society.
8. From a practical standpoint while many people assume that the state saves money by employing the death penalty since an executed person no longer requires confinement, health care, and related expenses etc.
  - a. In reality the modern application of capital punishment is far more expensive than a system utilizing life-without-parole sentences as an alternative punishment