



# Defending a Culture of Life: Pro-Death Penalty Claims and a Pro-life Response

## **Claim:**

“The death penalty acts as a deterrent that prevents people from committing crimes.”

## **Response:**

There is no evidence that the death penalty acts as a deterrent. In fact 88% of the presidents of the country’s top academic criminological societies rejected the notion that the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder.

Source: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf>

## **Claim:**

“The death penalty is more cost-effective than housing and feeding someone in prison for life.”

## **Response:**

Funding the death penalty costs taxpayers more money than life in prison without parole. 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. This is due to the lengthy appeals process that comes with any death penalty convictions and the cost of executions.

Source: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf>

## Claim:

“The death penalty gives victim's families closure.”



## Response:

Again, perpetuating a cycle of violence in our Justice system only creates more broken families. Many loved ones of victims speak out against the death penalty as they believe that another killing would not bring closure and detracts from a victim and community centered justice system. Marietta Jaeger Lane, whose daughter was kidnapped and murdered, said, "Loved ones, wrenched from our lives by violent crime, deserve more beautiful, noble and honorable memorials than premeditated, state-sanctioned killings. The death penalty only creates more victims and more grieving families. By becoming that which we deplore -- people who kill people -- we insult the sacred memory of all our precious victims."

Source:<https://www.journeyofhope.org/who-we-are/murder-victim-family/marietta-jaeger-lane/>

## Claim:

"Lethal injection is a humane way to carry out the death penalty."

## Response:

While most states use lethal injection as their main execution method, there is no way to ensure that an execution can be "painless and humane." In fact, the drugs used in lethal injection paralyze the victim in order that they can't exhibit any symptoms of pain. For example, when Dennis McGuire was executed on January 16th, 2014, he gasped for air for some 25 minutes while the drugs used in the execution, hydromorphone, and midazolam, slowly took effect. Witnesses reported that after the drugs were injected, McGuire was struggling, with his stomach heaving and fist clenched, making "horrible" snorting and choking sounds.

Source:<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/lethal-injection/>



## Claim:

“The state only executes people they know are guilty.”

## Response:

There have been numerous cases of inmates on death row being exonerated. As of May 2017, 159 people have been exonerated from death row. And there are several cases where a person was executed despite claims and evidence of innocence. In 2015, Georgia executed Brian Terrell, despite there being no physical evidence linking Terrell of the crime. The state's main witness, Jermaine Johnson, later told defense investigators he lied to save himself. Johnson spent a year in jail facing the threat of the death penalty before he made a deal with prosecutors to testify against Terrell in exchange for a five-year sentence.

Source:<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executed-possibly-innocent>

## Claim:

"The Death Penalty is carried out in a fair a just manner."

## Response:

Many statistics show that the death penalty targets the poor and vulnerable of our society. Most death row defendants are unable to afford to hire their own attorney or forensic experts. There is also evidence of racial and geographical bias in death penalty sentencing. Jurors in Washington state are three times more likely to recommend a death sentence for a black defendant than for a white defendant in a similar case. As for geographical bias, Eighty-three percent of all executions since 1976 have taken place in the South; and in 2008, 95% of executions occurred in the South.

Souces:<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/arbitrariness#Geography>

<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf>