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The Necessary Abolition of the Death Penalty

Legal in twenty-seven states, the death penalty allows the nation to turn a blind eye to glaring issues regarding crime as well as promote an absence of compassion. Proponents advocate for the victim's family's sense of pain and their deserved vengeance, while ignoring the same pain of the accused person's loved ones. The death penalty needs to be abolished nationwide on the grounds that it harbors racist tendencies, has high fallacy rates, is costly, and challenges the fundamental ideas of democracy.

The United States has had a long history of racist motivations regarding incarceration that goes in step with false imprisonment and wrongfully conducted murders. The 1970s War on Drugs promoted arrests more frequently, on smaller charges, and longer sentences specifically of black people. The precise constancy of black incarceration is that of a rate five times faster than white Americans (sentencingproject.org). Police racial biases, smaller drug offenses, and a distinct racial tension have all contributed to this mass incarceration of black individuals. These racist arrest tendencies have led to a disproportionate number of black people on death row. Sometimes without appropriate process or regard for human life, individuals are sentenced to the death penalty under the mere assumption of guilt. With the time's racial biases and ambition to incarcerate the highest number of individuals, there was ample room for wrongful executions. Since 1973, "at least 186 people who had been wrongly convicted and sentenced to death in the

U.S. have been exonerated... for every 8.3 people executed in the United States in the modern era of the death penalty, one person on death row has been exonerated” (deathpenaltyinfo.org). 1 every 8.3 people falsely accused is an extremely poor success rate when it comes to the taking of a life. The discontinuance of the death penalty is essential when there is a discussion on the innocence or guilt of a person before death. One of the 186 falsely accused individuals was Troy Davis, a good hearted and high aspiring drill technician. On August 19, 1989, Troy Davis was present at a park during a shooting. The actual killer accused Troy Davis, nine people gave eyewitness accounts supporting his claim, and a jury convicted Davis and recommended the death penalty. After twelve years, seven of the nine had recanted their statement and told newspapers that “police pressured them”. Many failed appeals later and Troy was executed, despite an abundant amount of contradicting evidence. His last conversation was telling his sister to clear his name and end the death penalty. His final words were “I am innocent” (mtinnocenceproject.org). This story stands out in multiple ways. First, it shows the racial predisposition to inculcate and give little thought to a trial of a suspected black accused person. Secondly, the story of Troy Davis demonstrates the clear acceptance of proposed fact. The eyewitnesses and police alike held onto one accusation and went with it. Even when the witnesses later recanted, officials continued with the trial. This shows how the death penalty could be used simply to put an end to a dispute. If one is accused and killed, the public mind is at ease. The death penalty should not, but is continuously used as an easy out. As demonstrated in Troy Davis’s execution, the death penalty harbors racial prejudices and allows for the persistent prevalence of wrongful deaths.

When the death penalty is carried out, it poses both a greater monetary and ethical cost. Comparatively speaking, it costs more to kill an inmate than to sentence them to life without

parole. Not only does the abolition of the death penalty save taxpayers and the government money, but it also allows the United States to emphasize reformation of prisoners. Inmates would not see themselves as doomed convicts, but rather someone with a future. To choose to nurture instead of kill these potentially great individuals would have an “average savings per prisoner is \$159,523” (Ballotpedia.org). These significant savings are because death row inmates are treated with the upmost quality food and care for the end of their lives. Additionally, the entire prison goes into lockdown, so extra staff must be paid, food boxes distributed, hotel rooms for the family booked, and a coffin and burial purchased, etc. Trials are often postponed and in the case of Troy Davis, do not happen for upwards of twenty years, thus prolonging this high end, expensive treatment. The real cost of the death penalty lies in its inefficient nature and barbaric happenings. In *The Takeaway* podcast, “Deep Dive with Dorian Warren: The American Death Penalty”, the host references the abundance of tragic botches of the death penalty, an action meant to “humanely” take one’s life. The ability to humanely take one’s established life appears to be nonexistent, as it is an overstepping of power and respect. A retired Florida warden, Ron McAndrew shares how he witnessed a flame shoot out of a person’s body as he was electrocuted. When asked for an explanation of how he felt, all he said was, “I’ll be in therapy the rest of my life.” When humans are involved in the killing of a completely defenseless person in extreme measures with a high fallacy rate, it is animalistic and challenges the beliefs of free democracy. An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Retaliating with murder for any wrongful action disallows any progress to be made. The nation is stuck in a loop of murders happening, but normalizing it by murdering in retaliation. The prisoner is not given a punishment related to the crime, not taught how to be better, and not given the resources to do so. Instead, they are permanently punished with death in a process that expresses anger in an appalling, pointless

method. The death penalty has not shown to be any type of deterrent, as it was originally intended to be. There have been no significant changes in crime or violence in states where the death penalty has been instated (aclu.org). This shows that the main issue lies not in killing of an individual, but in the absence of new ideology. The nation needs to better its reformation process in order to deter crime. The inhumane idea of the death penalty needs to be abolished nationwide so that compassion is emphasized, and money is saved while doing so.

The death penalty has proved itself to be one of the most ineffective normalcies of the time. It relies on racial tendencies, costly procedures, inhumane practices, and a high failure rate. For the nation to achieve the deterrence it seeks, the approach to the justice system itself must change. It is time for compassion and sophistication to be the face of the system, not the barbarianism and resentment it currently exhibits.

Works Cited

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