



## Facts about the Death Penalty

(As of May 15, 2017)

- New death sentences in Texas have **dropped dramatically** since peaking in 1999, when juries sentenced 48 people to death. In 2016, juries in Texas imposed the death penalty in 3 cases.
- Just **7 counties account for 65% of new death sentences** imposed in the last five years.

| Texas' Highest Sentencing Counties 2012-2016 |      |      |      |      |      |                 |                  |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total 2012-2016 | Total Since 1974 |
| Harris                                       | 0    | 1    | 4    | 0    | 0    | 5               | 294              |
| Dallas                                       | 2    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 5               | 107              |
| Tarrant                                      | 2    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 4               | 74               |
| McLennan                                     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 3               | 18               |
| Brazos                                       | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 2               | 17               |
| Kaufman                                      | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 2               | 3                |
| Smith  | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 2               | 24               |
| Total  | 7    | 5    | 7    | 2    | 2    | 23              | 537              |
| Total All Counties                           | 9    | 9    | 11   | 3    | 3    | 35              | 1,095            |

- Since 1973, **159 individuals** – including 13 people in Texas – have been released from death rows nationwide due to evidence of their wrongful conviction.
- The State of Texas has executed **542 people** since 1982, accounting for more than one-third of the 1,452 executions nationwide since 1977.
- In 2017, the State of Texas has put **4 people to death**, out of 10 executions nationwide.
- Currently, there are **238 people on death row** in Texas, including 6 women; this is the smallest death row population since the late 1980s.
- In Texas, the cost of an average death penalty case is **nearly three times higher** than imprisoning someone in maximum security for life.
- **31 states** have now abandoned the death penalty in law or practice.
- **141 countries** have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2016, the top five executing countries were China, Iran, Viet Nam, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. This marks the first time since 2006, and only the second time since 1991, the United States is not among the world's five biggest executioners.

## **The Death Penalty in Dallas County**

- Dallas County has not accounted for any new death sentences since 2013.
- Overall, Dallas County is responsible for 107 death sentences in Texas (second only to Harris County).
- All nine men sentenced to death in Dallas or Tarrant County since 2012 are African American.
- More than 40 men in Dallas County have been exonerated of serious crimes since 2001; many of those exonerations were based on DNA evidence.
- Collectively, 40 people sentenced to death in Dallas or Tarrant County have been removed from death row; in most cases, their sentences were commuted.
- The State of Texas has executed 56 people who were convicted and sentenced to death in Dallas County (behind only Harris County). There is one execution date set in 2017 for an individual convicted in Dallas County.

## **The Death Penalty in Tarrant County**

- Tarrant County accounts for 4 death sentences since 2012 and 74 overall. The death sentence imposed on Amos Wells III in November 2016 was the first such verdict in more than two years.
- All nine men sentenced to death in Dallas or Tarrant County since 2012 are African American.
- Collectively, 40 people sentenced to death in Dallas or Tarrant County have been removed from death row; in most cases, their sentences were commuted.
- Tarrant County accounts for 40 executions since 1982, including the two executions in 2017.