

The
DEATH PENALTY
in
TEXAS

A study guide for Texas faith communities



Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Timeline

1800s

November 30, 1846 – Jesse Grinder is the first person to be executed in the new state of Texas.

1852 – Rhode Island is the first U.S. state to fully abolish capital punishment.

1900s

February 28, 1924 – Five men are put to death in Texas, the first to be executed by the electric chair. “Old Sparky” was used 361 times before being retired in 1964.

1972 – The U.S. Supreme Court finds the administration of capital punishment to be “cruel and unusual” in *Furman v. Georgia*, effectively ruling statutes in 40 states unconstitutional.

1974 – Texas and other states write new capital punishment statutes and challenge the Supreme Court’s decision.

1976 – The Supreme Court rules the new death penalty statutes constitutional in *Gregg v. Georgia*; 34 states reinstate it.

January 17, 1977 – Gary Gilmore is the first person to be executed after reinstatement, by firing squad in Utah.

December 7, 1982 – Texas executes Charles Brooks by lethal injection, the first use of that method and the first execution in Texas since the *Gregg* decision.

September 11, 1985 – Texas is the first state since reinstatement to execute someone for a crime committed as a juvenile. Between 1985 and 2003, 22 juvenile offenders were executed nationally, 13 in Texas.

February 3, 1998 – Karla Faye Tucker is the first woman to be executed in Texas since 1863. Only 9 women have been executed in Texas history, 6 since the Civil War.

2000s

2002 – The Supreme Court rules that executing people with intellectual disabilities is a violation of the Eighth Amendment in *Atkins v. Virginia*.

2005 – The Supreme Court prohibits the execution of juvenile offenders (those under age 18 at the time of the crime) in *Roper v. Simmons*.

September 2005 – The sentencing option of Life in Prison without the Possibility of Parole goes into effect in Texas.

2011 – Texas stops honoring last meal requests.

July 18, 2012 – Yokamon Hearn is the first person in Texas to be executed by a single dose of pentobarbital.

2013 – Maryland becomes the sixth state in six years to abandon the death penalty.

June 25, 2013 – Kimberly McCarthy is the 500th person executed in Texas since 1982.

April 2014 – A horribly botched execution in Oklahoma renews concerns about the secrecy now surrounding the lethal injection protocols in numerous death penalty states, including Texas.

Texas still executes more people than any other state in the U.S. New death sentences in Texas have declined 75 percent over the last decade and new death sentences numbered in the single digits from 2009-2013. Since the death penalty was reinstated nationally in 1976, Texas has executed more than 500 men and women—more than one-third of all executions in the United States in the period.

Some Texans oppose capital punishment for religious or moral reasons. Others support capital punishment in principle but worry that it might be applied unfairly in Texas. In recent years, many religious groups have called for abolition of the death penalty in the U.S. Most religious calls for abolition identify capital punishment as inconsistent with their beliefs and values. There are also religious scholars who support capital punishment. They point to accounts of executions in their sacred texts and histories, and argue that death is a just punishment for taking another person's life.

This study guide will look at the status of capital punishment in Texas, non-religious criteria for evaluating the death penalty, religious support and opposition to the death penalty, and the possible future of capital punishment in Texas.

Capital Punishment in Texas

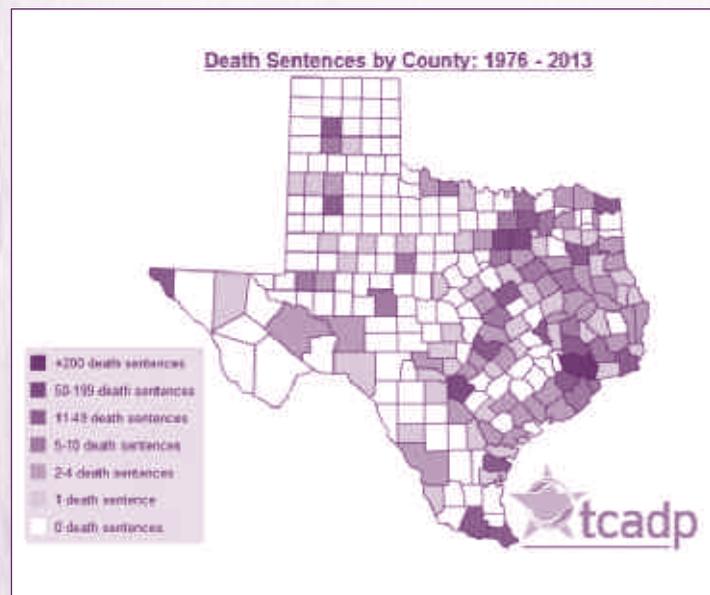
The number of death row inmates in Texas is at its lowest level since the 1980s, as the rate of executions has exceeded the rate of new sentences in recent years. A total of 32 states, the federal government, and the military allow capital punishment, although seven of those states haven't had an execution since the 1990s.

Men awaiting execution in Texas are held in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Polunsky Prison Unit in Livingston, and women are incarcerated at the Mountain View Unit in

Gatesville. All executions take place at the Walls Unit in Huntsville. On average, individuals spend 10.74 years on death row while appealing their cases. Men on death row are kept in solitary confinement under austere conditions: they are unable to recreate with other individuals, they are not granted access to religious services, and they are not permitted to receive contact visits from their loved ones. Women on death row have a few more privileges available to them, including being able to participate in a work program. Since 2011, individuals on death row have been denied the opportunity to request a last meal prior to their execution.

Capital offenses (crimes for which someone can be sentenced to death) include: murder of a public safety officer or firefighter; murder during the commission of kidnapping, burglary, robbery, aggravated sexual assault, arson, or obstruction or retaliation; murder during prison escape; murder of a correctional employee; murder by someone who is serving a life sentence in a state prison on any of five offenses (murder, capital murder, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated sexual assault, or aggravated robbery); multiple murders; murder of an individual under ten years of age. Under Texas' law of parties, people who aid, abet, or conspire with someone committing a crime are equally responsible for the crime and can incur the same punishments, including the death penalty.

Some methods of execution are designed to protect the mental health of the executioners. For example, a firing squad uses multiple shooters not only to ensure that it works but also to diffuse responsibility; often, one of the shooters is given a gun with a fake bullet to give each of them the sense that they were not directly responsible for a person's death. During some lethal injections, two people give injections, one containing the lethal drugs and one containing only saline.



In 2011, drug manufacturers in Europe began placing restrictions on the use of their products in executions. The dwindling supply has led to a sharp increase in price and states have had to find alternative ways to procure the drugs, sometimes resorting to less-regulated vendors or using expired products. Many states, including Texas, have been experimenting with new kinds of lethal injection; currently, Texas executes people with an injection of pentobarbital, a sedative that causes respiratory arrest. Uncertainty and botched executions have led people on death row and advocates to challenge whether using untested methods is a violation of the Eighth Amendment.

Executions in Texas were performed by hanging until 1923, when the state switched to the electric chair. In an effort to find a more humane method of execution, states began to move from electrocution to lethal injection in the 1970s and 1980s. The three-drug protocol that became the standard in the U.S. consisted of sodium thiopental, a sedative; pancuronium bromide, a paralytic; and potassium chloride, which stops the heart.



DISCUSSION: Why do you think only some kinds of murders are punishable by death? Do you agree that the kinds of crime that can result in a death sentence on Texas' list are the worst? Over our history we have moved away from such harsh punishments as cutting off a thief's hands and executing individuals for blasphemy. Why do you think the death penalty remains? What do you think about the issue of culpability and trying to reduce the sense of ultimate responsibility for the executioner(s)?

Evaluating The Death Penalty

We will start by looking at the death penalty through three lenses:

- Is it useful?
- Is it fair?
- Is it right?

Is It Useful?

Many people support the death penalty because they believe it deters future crimes and gives relief to victims' families. While they may have misgivings about the state's killing individuals, they see execution as a pragmatic issue.

According to FBI data, the presence of the death penalty in a state does not translate into lower homicide rates. A 2000 study by the *New York Times* found that since 1976, states that have the death penalty actually had higher homicide rates than states without the death penalty. Law enforcement experts explain that most homicides are unpremeditated crimes of passion—people about to commit a murder do not usually pause to consider what might happen if they are tried and convicted.

While many family members of people who have been murdered support the death penalty for their loved one's killer, others point to personal and spiritual reasons to oppose it. Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) is an organization that supports families who oppose capital punishment for the individuals who murdered their relatives. Founded in 1976, MVFR works to counter the commonly-held belief that victims' families require an execution to enable their own healing.

"After a murder, victims' families face two things: a death and a crime. At these times, families need help to cope with their grief and loss, and support to heal their hearts and rebuild their lives. From experience, we know that revenge is not the answer. The answer lies in reducing violence, not causing more death. The answer lies in supporting those who grieve for their lost loved ones, not creating more grieving families. It is time we break the cycle of violence. To those who say society must take a life for a life, we say: 'not in our name.'" Marie Deans, founder of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation

LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

Polls suggest that public support for the death penalty declines when life without parole is presented as an alternative. Forty-nine states have life without parole; Alaska, the only state without it, has ninety-nine years as the maximum sentencing option. Texas was the most recent state to adopt life without parole in 2005. In the first six years it was a sentencing option, Texas sentenced nearly 400 people to life without parole and 62 people to death, a dramatic reduction in death sentences from previous years.

DISCUSSION: In your faith, are all people useful—does everyone have something to contribute? When is a person of more use to society dead than alive? Can they ever redeem themselves?

Is It Fair?

When the U.S. Supreme Court suspended the death penalty from 1972 to 1976, it did so out of concern that capital punishment as administered at the time violated both the constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment and the constitutional guarantee of due process.

There are four factors that greatly increase someone's likelihood of receiving a death sentence: gender, race, class, and geography.

Men are far more likely than women to be executed; while women are convicted of about ten percent of murders, they account for two percent of executions nationally and less than one percent in Texas.

People of color are also disproportionately sentenced and executed. African-American Texans are three times more likely than white Texans to receive a death sentence. African-Americans account for 13 percent of the state's population but 42 percent of the Texas death row population.

Almost without exception, individuals on trial for capital offenses are indigent and must rely on court-appointed legal counsel for their defense. Until 2002, the state paid none of the cost of indigent defense. About one out of every four individuals currently on death row in Texas was represented by a lawyer who has been reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended or banned from practicing law by the State Bar of Texas. A report by the Texas Defender Service concluded that people on death row have "a one-in-three chance of being executed without having the case properly investigated by a competent attorney and without having any claims of innocence or unfairness presented or heard."

Death sentences have never been uniformly imposed in Texas – in fact, more than half of the state's 254 counties have never sent anyone to death row. A report released in 2013 by the Death Penalty Information Center revealed that just two percent of counties account for the vast majority of death sentences and executions nationwide; 9 counties in Texas are among the top 15 counties by execution since 1976. In recent years, just 6 counties in Texas have accounted for more than half of the new death sentences in our state. Individual district attorneys have sole discretion in deciding whether to seek the death penalty in capital cases.

"I have yet to see a death case among the dozens coming to the Supreme Court on eve-of-execution stay applications in which the defendant was well represented at trial." Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, April 9, 2001

Innocent people are sometimes convicted of crimes, including capital offenses. Twelve people sentenced to death in Texas have been exonerated while on death row, about one percent of all Texas death sentences since 1976. Nearly 150 people have been exonerated and released from death rows nationwide. A recent study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests that over four percent of all those sentenced to death in the United States from 1973 through 2004 were innocent. The percentage of innocent people sentenced to death (4.1%) is more than double the percentage of those actually exonerated and freed from death row during the study period (1.6%). These national figures bolster the widely-held concern that Texas has executed innocent people. For more information about this concern, visit the Death Penalty Information Center: www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/executed-possibly-innocent

DISCUSSION: Do you think there is a way to make the death penalty completely equal across race, gender, and class? What would that be? If you knew the death penalty was fairly applied, would you be more likely to support it? Why do you think it has been applied so unevenly across the state of Texas? What is an acceptable margin of error in the application of the death penalty?

Is It Right?

When we talk about capital punishment in a religious context, we usually talk about whether it is right rather than if it is useful and fair. Faith communities often look to their beliefs around the human condition, forgiveness/grace, and nonviolence when assessing the death penalty.

THE HUMAN CONDITION

Beliefs about the human condition center around the things that are innate to all people—for example, that we are all imperfect or that we are all created in the image of God. Our fallibility means that we are not qualified to decide whether someone should live or die.

In the Jewish and Christian creation story, all human beings are created in the image of God and, as a result, have inherent dignity.

FORGIVENESS/GRACE

In the Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—forgiveness is a key aspect of humans' relationship with God. Christians believe that people are redeemed by God's grace, and therefore are called to forgive. For Muslims, mercy is a key attribute of Allah.

NONVIOLENCE

Religious groups may oppose the death penalty if they believe it conflicts with their pursuit of non-violence. In Buddhism and other traditions, abstention from killing or causing harm is a primary precept.

JUDGMENT

Many religious texts, such as the Qur'an and the Dharma Sastra, include a legal code and ways for people who break laws to be punished, including the death penalty. These texts often raise the question of who has a right to judge and who is able to judge rightly. In the Torah, many crimes are punishable by death, but the use of capital punishment was extremely rare due to a high burden of proof and judicial oversight.

Some Christian groups, like the Southern Baptist Convention, believe that God has entrusted governments with the power to perform executions. Others believe that only God has a right to take human life.

(Continued on page 7)

Faith Statements

“Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirm its opposition to capital punishment and call on the dioceses and members of this church to work actively to abolish the death penalty in their states...”

- 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church (Originally passed in 1958; affirmed in 2000)

“Like all affronts to the dignity of life, the death penalty diminishes humanity. Church teaching on the life and dignity of every human person should guide all our decisions about life, including the use of the death penalty. We cannot overcome crime by executing criminals nor can we restore the lives of the innocent by ending the lives of those convicted of their murders. We are called to reflect on what the Lord’s command, ‘You shall not kill’ (Ex 20:13) means for us today.”

- The Texas Catholic Conference

“An action, even if it brings benefit to oneself, cannot be considered a good action if it causes physical and mental pain to another being.”

- The Buddha

“Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you, so that you may learn wisdom.”

- Qur’an 6:151

“The critical question for the Christian is how we can best foster respect for life, preserve the dignity of the human person and manifest the redemptive message of Christ. We do not believe that more deaths are the response to the question.”

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Social Development and World Peace, March 1, 1978

“The universal abolition of the death penalty would be a courageous reaffirmation of the belief that humankind can be successful in dealing with criminality and of our refusal to succumb to despair before such forces, and as such it would regenerate new hope in our very humanity.”

- Declaration of the Holy See, 2005

“We believe that the government’s use of death as an instrument of justice places the state in the role of God, who alone is sovereign; and...the use of the death penalty in a representative democracy places citizens in the role of executioner; Christians cannot isolate themselves from corporate responsibility, including responsibility for every execution, as well as for every victim.”

- 197th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA (Originally passed in 1959; affirmed in 1985 and 2010)

“The Master said, ‘To impose the death penalty without first reforming the people is to be cruel...”

- The Analects, Lau [20:2]

“We agree that the death penalty is cruel, unjust, and incompatible with the dignity and self respect of man.”

- American Jewish Committee Statement on Capital Punishment, 1972

“Holy Scriptures clearly mandate that we are not to kill, we are not to render evil for evil, and that we are not to seek retribution with vengeance for the evil done to us.”

- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Resolution Concerning Opposition to The Use Of The Death Penalty (Originally passed in 1985; reaffirmed in 2003)

“The United Methodist Church cannot accept retribution or social vengeance as a reason for taking human life. It violates our deepest belief in God as the creator and the redeemer of humankind. In this respect, there can be no assertion that human life can be taken humanely by the state.”

- General Conference of the United Methodist Church (Originally passed in 1956; affirmed in 2000)

“Therefore, be it resolved, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention...support the fair and equitable use of capital punishment by civil magistrates as a legitimate form of punishment for those guilty of murder or treasonous acts that result in death; and be it further resolved, That we urge that capital punishment be administered only when the pursuit of truth and justice result in clear and overwhelming evidence of guilt.”

- Southern Baptist Convention, 2000

“You have heard that it was said, ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

- The Bible, Matthew 5:38-39

“As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”

- The Torah, Ezekiel 33:11

DISCUSSION: What does your faith tradition say about the death penalty? What do members of your faith community think about the death penalty? Do these two things differ, and if so, why? Have you ever discussed this issue in your faith community or heard your faith leader address it?

GOING FORWARD

When discussing the death penalty, people often believe there are three options for its future in Texas:

1. **LEAVE IT:** Many people believe that the death penalty in Texas is already useful, fair, and right. In fact, 73 percent of Texans support the death penalty in theory or in practice, according to a 2012 poll by the University of Texas/Texas Tribune.

2. **FIX IT:** Other Texans believe that our capital punishment system is useful and right, but not fair; the same poll found that only 51 percent believe that capital punishment is applied fairly.

While we go about reforming our system, we could either keep sentencing people to death and executing those already on death row; or we could put a moratorium in place, which would halt all new sentences and executions but leave people on death row until a decision is made.

The American Bar Association, which does not have an official stance on whether or not capital punishment is right, published a report in 2013 detailing the flaws in the Texas capital punishment system along with suggestions for how to make it fairer and more accurate. In addition to their reports about the application of the death penalty in specific states, the ABA has a set of national standards and recommends a moratorium until those standards can be met.

In 2001, the governor of Illinois declared a moratorium while a panel of experts examined the state's capital punishment system and how to make it fair. Illinois ultimately ended the moratorium in 2011 by abolishing the death penalty altogether.

3. **END IT:** Some people, especially people of faith, see the death penalty as neither useful and fair nor right. These people may support a moratorium as a temporary measure, but ultimately see the system as irreparably broken or inherently wrong.

While these options are possible in the future, there are other things Texans of faith can do in the meantime. Whatever one's views of the death penalty may be, taking a life is no small thing and merits at the very least intense discussion and discernment. Consider the issue from different perspectives, and encourage your fellow congregants to do the same:

- Host a discussion on the issue in your congregation highlighting various faith traditions' perspectives
- Publish an article on the death penalty in your next newsletter or denominational newspaper
- Show a film, followed by a discussion
- Examine passages in your faith tradition's holy book or teachings that address the death penalty; use these passages to launch a discussion

- Invite people touched by the issue to share their personal stories: exonerated inmates, family members of murder victims, or family members of the executed

- Observe a moment of silence during your worship service to reflect on the victims and perpetrators of violence

- Publicize your faith tradition's position or other information on the death penalty in the bulletin or program of your worship service

- Encourage your faith leader to address the issue in a sermon

- Organize an information table with literature on the death penalty (materials available from organizations listed in this discussion guide)

- Host a vigil or prayer service on the days of executions in Texas

- Get involved with one or more of the organizations listed as a resource in this guide

Support for any of the above activities is available from state and national organizations working on the death penalty.

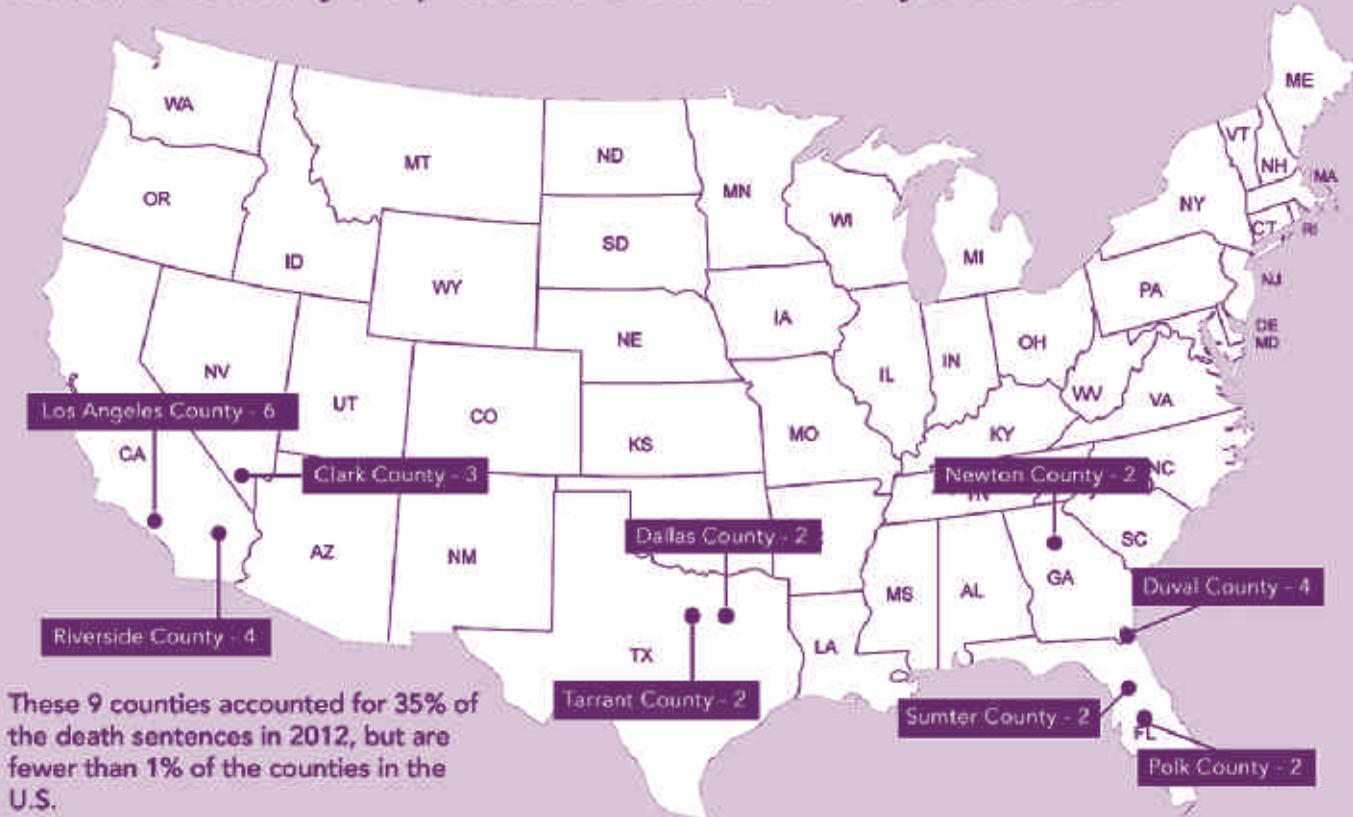
DISCUSSION: Where would you like capital punishment in Texas to be in ten years? Do you believe that goal is possible, and what steps do you believe need to be taken to achieve it? As a citizen of a democracy, do you think the people are ultimately responsible for the policies we institute? If so, what responsibility do we hold as individuals in our state's use of the death penalty? What ways do you think you and your congregation can move the issue forward?

“I think the religious community has played an enormous role in having people question their consciences about where they stand on the death penalty.”

– E.J. Dionne, Jr., Senior Fellow:
The Brookings Institution

LEADING COUNTIES IN DEATH SENTENCES 2012

Contrary to the perception that the death penalty is widely used in the United States, it is actually the product of a distinct minority of counties.



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Source: "THE 2% DEATH PENALTY"
For more info, visit deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent

Resources on the Death Penalty

FILMS:

"70X7 the Forgiveness Equation." This short film thrusts viewers into the turmoil between two sisters, Sue Norton and Maudie Hills, whose responses in the aftermath of their parents' murder varied widely. The film also relives the horrific Oklahoma City terrorist attack in which Bud Welch's young daughter was killed. His story reveals an unorthodox relationship with the father of the convicted killer, Timothy McVeigh. Through their stories, these individuals share how they coped with unforeseen bereavement, profound feelings of helplessness, rage and revenge, and, for some, a move towards reconciliation and forgiveness. 2008. 36 minutes.

"At the Death House Door." This film presents the journey of Reverend Carroll Pickett, the former Texas death house chaplain who accompanied 95 men – including Carlos DeLuna, likely an innocent man – to their executions. 2007. 1 hour, 37 minutes.

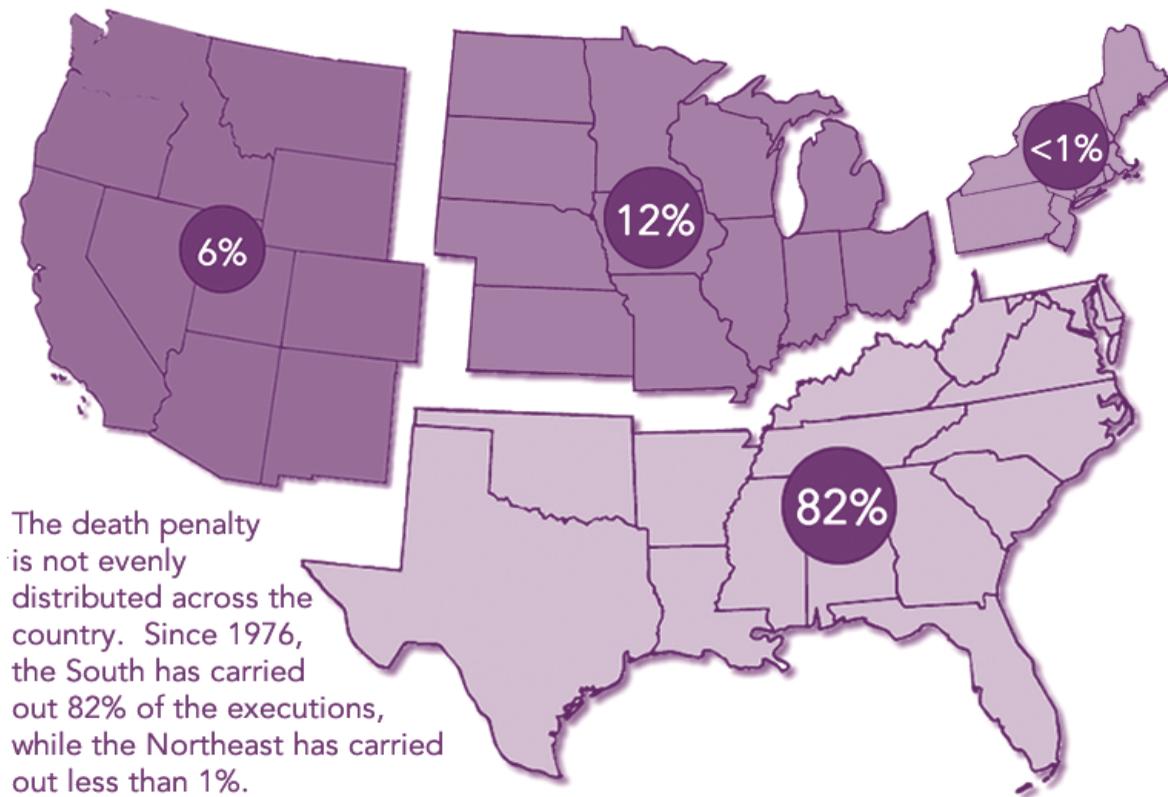
"A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death." The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides this short film and discussion as a call for the nation to abandon the use of the death penalty

and move one step closer to building a culture of life. People like Bud Welch, whose daughter died in the Oklahoma City bombing, and David Kaczynski, brother of the Unibomber, are some of the voices that have joined with the bishops in this campaign to end the use of death penalty. The stories and narrative highlight flaws in the death penalty and advocate that Catholics oppose the death penalty in order to build a culture of life. 2006. 15 minutes.

"Dead Man Walking." Academy Award-winning feature film shares the story of Sister Helen Prejean, who comforts Matthew Poncelet, a convicted killer on death row, and empathizes with both the killer and his victims' families. Stars Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn. 1996. 122 minutes.

"The Empty Chair." In this film, four families whose loved ones were murdered confront their notions of revenge, forgiveness, and healing. This film works well with audiences who hold mixed views on the death penalty or groups that are addressing the issue for the first time. It includes commentary from Sister Helen Prejean. 2003. 52 minutes.

EXECUTIONS BY REGION SINCE 1976



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Source: "THE 2% DEATH PENALTY"
For more info, visit deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent

"Juan Melendez-6446." Juan Roberto Melendez Colon spent 6,446 days on death row in Florida for a crime he did not commit. "Juan Melendez-6446" exposes a legal system where wrongful convictions are a reality with stark human consequences. Produced both in Spanish and English by the Civil Rights Commission of Puerto Rico, this short film provides an excellent opportunity to spark discussion about the legal system and death penalty in the United States. 2008. 49 minutes.

BOOKS:

Cahill, Thomas. *A SAINT ON DEATH ROW: The Story of Dominique Green*. Doubleday, 2009. On October 26, 2004, Dominique Green, thirty, was executed by lethal injection in Huntsville, Texas. Arrested at the age of eighteen in the fatal shooting of a man during a robbery outside a Houston convenience store, Green may have taken part in the robbery but always insisted that he did not pull the trigger. The jury, which had no African Americans on it, sentenced him to death. Despite obvious errors in the legal procedures and the protests of the victim's family, he spent the last twelve years of his life on Death Row. Cahill visited Dominique at the request of Judge Sheila Murphy, who was working on

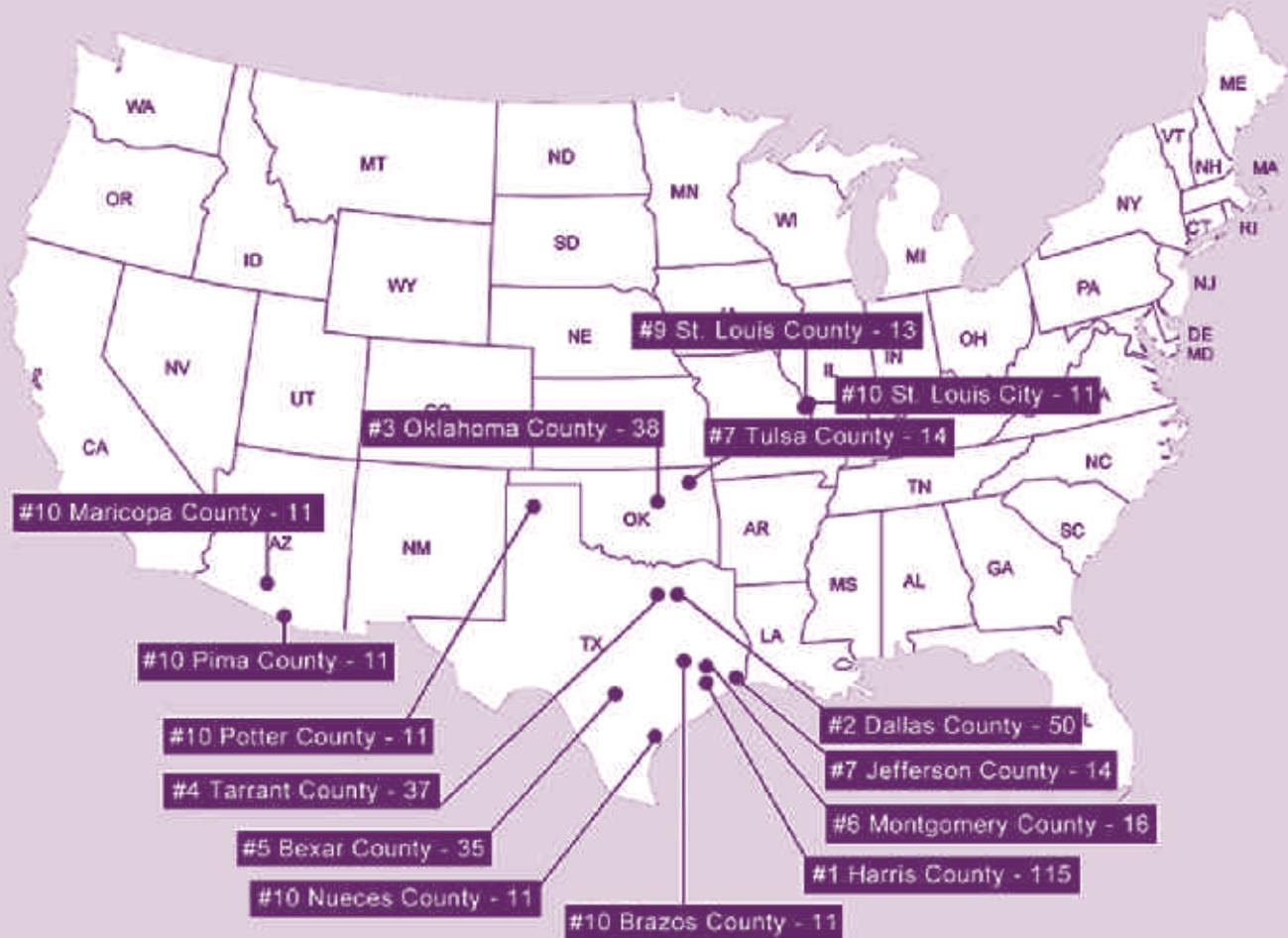
the appeal of the case. He ultimately joined the fight for Dominique's life, enlisting Archbishop Desmond Tutu to visit Dominique and to plead publicly for mercy.

Hamilton, Rev. Adam. *Confronting the Controversies: Biblical Perspectives on Tough Issues*. Abingdon Press, 2005. This group study of "tough issues" is based on Adam Hamilton's sermons on these topics. The study is designed as a "fishing expedition," with tools such as sermon starters and promotional aids that will enable congregations to make it a church and community-wide outreach event. It includes a chapter on the death penalty.

King, Rachel. *Don't Kill in Our Names: Families of Murder Victims Speak Out Against the Death Penalty*. Rutgers University Press, 2003. King's book is a collection of the wrenching accounts of individuals whose lives have been torn apart by murder but who oppose the death penalty, often working to save the life of their loved one's killer. These narratives intend to promote restorative justice, despite grief and the temptation for revenge. The book addresses the question of how one can move past the unforgettable and seemingly unforgivable.

TOP 15 COUNTIES BY EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976

Contrary to the perception that the death penalty is widely used in the United States, it is actually the product of a distinct minority of counties. Only 2% of counties have been responsible for the majority of cases leading to executions since 1976.



These Top 15 counties accounted for 30% of the executions in the U.S. since 1976, but are fewer than 1% of the counties in the U.S.

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Source: "THE 2% DEATH PENALTY"
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Osler, Mark. *Jesus on Death Row: The Trial of Jesus and American Capital Punishment*. Abingdon Press, 2009. Law professor and former prosecutor Osler challenges Christian support for the death penalty by fitting the story of Jesus' trial and death into the modern criminal justice process in the United States. His chapters follow the arc of Christ's last days and examine their symmetry with aspects of modern criminal trials, noting the use of a paid informant, denial of habeas corpus and humiliation of the convicted.

Recinella, Dale S. *The Biblical Truth About America's Death Penalty*. Northeastern, 2004. While secular support for capital punishment in America

seems to be waning, religious conservatives, particularly in the "Bible belt," remain staunch advocates of the death penalty, often citing biblical law and practice to defend government-sanctioned killing. Dale S. Recinella compares biblical teaching about the death penalty, including such passages as "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life," with the nation's current system of capital punishment, and offers persuasive arguments for a faith-based moratorium on – and eventual abolition of – executions.

Most of these films and books are available on loan from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Contact info@tcadp.org to request materials.

To Find Out More:

Texas Organizations

StandDown Texas Project
<http://standdown.typepad.com/>
@standdown_tx

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Texas Interfaith Center For Public Policy
www.texasinterfaithcenter.org
@Texasinterfaith

Texas Mercy Project
<http://www.txcatholicmercyproject.org>
@TXCatholic

National Organizations

Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the
Death Penalty
<http://catholicmobilizing.org>
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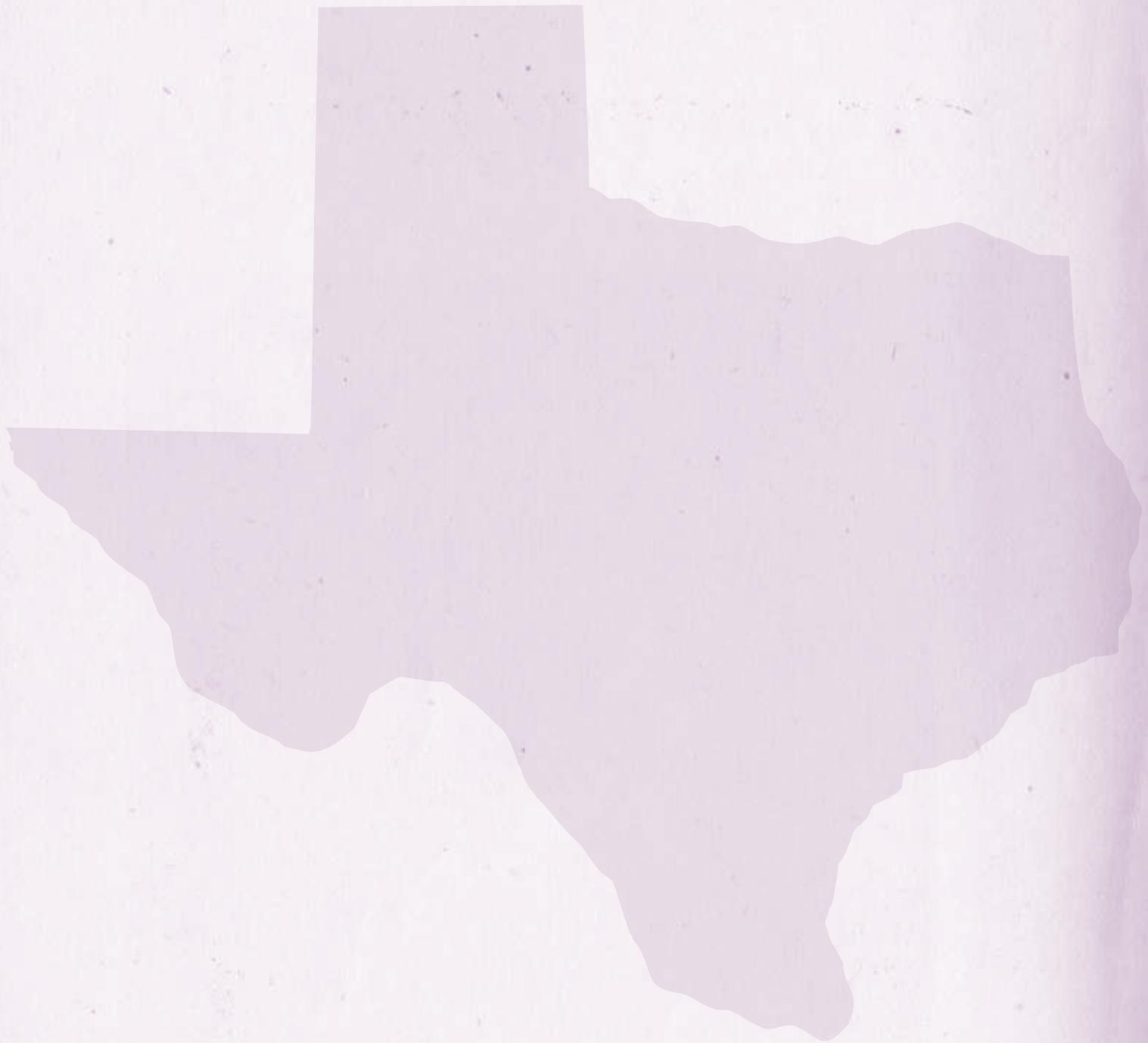
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Equal Justice USA
www.ejusa.org
@EJUSA

Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation
www.mvfr.org
@MVFRUS

People of Faith Against the Death Penalty
www.pfadp.org
@PFADP

Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project
<http://www.pewforum.org/topics/death-penalty/>
@pewresearch



**TEXAS INTERFAITH
CENTER**
for public policy

The Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy is a faith-based, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing theologically grounded public policy analysis to people of faith and other Texans. The Center is the research and education arm of Texas Impact, the state's oldest and largest interfaith legislative network. Texas Impact was established by Texas religious leaders in 1973 to be a voice in the Texas legislative process for the shared religious social concerns of Texas' faith communities. Texas Impact is supported by more than two dozen Christian, Jewish and Muslim denominational bodies, as well as hundreds of local congregations, ministerial alliances and interfaith networks, and thousands of people of faith throughout Texas.

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