



The Death Penalty in Bexar County

- Bexar County is responsible for the **third highest number of death sentences** (76 total) imposed by juries since 1974, behind Harris and Dallas Counties. Juries there have imposed **just two new death sentences** in the past decade, however.
- New death sentences in Texas have **dropped significantly** since peaking in 1999, when juries sentenced 48 people to death. In 2018, new death sentences remained in the single digits for the ninth time in ten years.
- Between 2009 and 2012, juries in Bexar County rejected the death penalty in four capital murder cases. The defendants were sentenced to life in prison without parole.
- In 2018, two capital murder cases in which Bexar County prosecutors sought the death penalty **resulted in mistrials**.
- Bexar County accounts for **46 of the 561 executions** carried out by the State of Texas since 1982. It falls behind only Harris and Dallas Counties in the number of executions.
- There are **8 individuals** still on death row who were convicted in Bexar County; six are Hispanic and two are African-American.
- Since 1973, **166 individuals** – including 13 people in Texas – have been released from death rows nationwide due to evidence of their wrongful conviction.
- **11 people** in Bexar County have been **exonerated of serious crimes** since 2011; many of those exonerations were based on perjury or false accusations.
- **21 people** sentenced to death in Bexar County have been removed from death row; in most cases, their sentences were commuted.
- There is strong evidence that Ruben Cantu was **wrongfully executed** by the State of Texas on August 24, 1993. Cantu's conviction was based largely on the testimony of a single eyewitness who later changed his story. His case inspired former Bexar County District Attorney Sam Millsap to speak out in his 2010 TedxSan Antonio talk entitled "Advocating for Truth: Why a Former Prosecutor No Longer Supports the Death Penalty."

The TCADP San Antonio Chapter meets on the second Wednesday of every month.

For more information, please contact Mardi Baron at mardibaron@gmail.com.

7/1/2019