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 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 exonations 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