Facts about the Death Penalty

• New death sentences in Texas have decreased drastically 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.

• To date in 2019, a Texas jury has imposed one new death sentence. A jury in Nueces County sentenced Gary David Green to death for killing Upton County deputy Billy “Bubba” Kennedy in 2013. The case was moved from West Texas. Twice this year, Texas juries have rejected the death penalty. Both defendants, Arturo Garza of Nueces County, and Daniel Greco of Denton County, received sentences of life without the possibility of parole.

• All seven men sentenced to death in Texas in 2018 are people of color. Over the last five years, more than 70% of death sentences have been imposed on people of color.

• Only four counties in Texas have imposed more than one death sentence in the last five years.

• Since 1973, 166 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 565 people since 1982, accounting for more than one-third of the 1,506 executions nationwide since 1977. In 2018, the State of Texas put 13 people to death (out of 25 executions nationwide).

• Texas is responsible for 7 of the 16 executions nationwide this year. Six scheduled executions were stayed by state or federal courts. Seven more executions are scheduled to take place in Texas by the end of 2019.

• Currently, there are 216 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 for life without the possibility of parole.

• 21 states have now abandoned the death penalty through legislation or judicial action.

• 142 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2018, the top five executing countries were China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Viet Nam, and Iraq.

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