Facts about the Death Penalty

- New death sentences in Texas have decreased significantly since peaking in 1999, when juries sentenced 48 people to death. In 2019, new death sentences remained in the single digits for the fifth year in a row. Texas juries imposed four new death sentences. In four other capital trials, jurors rejected the death penalty and sentenced the defendants to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

- To date in 2020, Texas juries have imposed two new death sentences (Collin and Harris Counties). Several other capital trials are postponed for the time being.

- Over the last five years, more than 70% of death sentences have been imposed on people of color.

- Only four counties in Texas (Harris, Smith, Tarrant and Walker) have imposed more than one death sentence in the last five years.

- Since 1973, 167 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 569 people since 1982, accounting for more than one-third of the 1,517 executions nationwide since 1977. In 2019, the State of Texas put 9 people to death (out of 22 executions nationwide); 9 other individuals scheduled to be executed in Texas received reprieves from state or federal courts.

- To date in 2020, the State of Texas has executed two people, while three men have received stays due to the global pandemic. Six additional execution dates remain in place despite the public health crisis.

- Currently, there are 214 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.

- 22 states have abandoned the death penalty – most recently, Colorado – through legislation or judicial decisions. Governors in three other states have imposed moratoria on executions.

- 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.