

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 2020, new death sentences remained in the **single digits** for the sixth year in a row.
- Texas juries imposed **two new death sentences** in 2020 (Collin and Harris counties). All other capital jury trials have been postponed because of the pandemic.
- Over the last five years, **70% of death sentences** have been imposed on people of color.
- **Only three counties** in Texas (Harris, Tarrant, and Walker) have imposed more than one death sentence in the last five years.
- Since 1973, **more than 170 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 **570 people** since 1982, accounting for **more than one-third** of the 1,529 executions nationwide since 1977.
- In 2020, the State of Texas **executed three people, the fewest executions since 1996**. It is one of only two states, along with the federal government, to put anyone to death during the global pandemic. Billy Joe Wardlow was executed on July 8, 2020 for a crime he committed in 1993 when he was 18 years old.
- **Eight other execution dates were stayed or withdrawn last year**, primarily due to the public health crisis. At this time, **the State of Texas has scheduled the executions of six people in 2021**.
- Currently, there are **207 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** (most recently, Colorado) have abandoned the death penalty through legislation or judicial decisions. Governors in three other states have imposed a moratorium on executions.
- **142 countries** have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2019, the top five executing countries were China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Egypt.

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