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**Three-quarters of Dallas voters prefer alternatives to the death penalty**

*Two-thirds of voters want the District Attorney to forgo seeking new death sentences; 83% support a review of all current death penalty cases from Dallas County*

Austin, Texas -- Dallas voters strongly support alternatives to the death penalty, according to a [recent poll](#) conducted by the independent research firm Public Policy Polling. When asked which punishment they prefer for people convicted of first-degree murder, 75% of respondents opted for a sentence of life in prison with a possibility of parole after 20 or 40 years or life in prison without parole. Only 14% of all respondents prefer the death penalty. Even among Trump voters, support for capital punishment was notably low, with only 31% saying they preferred the death penalty over alternatives.

“These results affirm what we’ve observed for the past decade: Texans of all political persuasions are moving away from the death penalty at a remarkable rate,” said Kristin Houlé Cuellar, the Executive Director of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP). “This is true even in the two counties that historically account for the most death sentences and executions, Dallas and Harris.”

Public Policy Polling surveyed 568 Dallas County voters from June 16-17, 2021. Here are the key findings:

- 63% of all respondents would support a decision by the Dallas County District Attorney to forgo seeking any new death sentences. This position received the highest support from Black voters (74% strongly or somewhat support).
- 83% of respondents would support a decision by the District Attorney to review the cases of every individual still on death row from Dallas County to ensure accuracy and fairness; 63% strongly support this action.
- A majority of voters across all demographic categories, including political ideology, are concerned about the risk of executing innocent people: 69% believe it is very or somewhat likely an innocent person has been convicted and sentenced to death in Dallas.

- Regardless of whether they support or oppose the death penalty, 64% of voters are most concerned about executing the innocent when it comes to the use of capital punishment.
- A majority of voters within each political ideology, from very liberal to very conservative, believe it is somewhat or very likely that racial bias impacts use of the death penalty in Dallas County. Concerns about racial bias in the application of the death penalty are strongest among Black voters (84%), but 67% of Latino voters and 60% of white voters also expressed concern.
- Support for the death penalty is lowest among Biden voters (5%), women (12%), Democrats (5%), Latino and Black voters (6%), 18- to 45-year-olds (12%), high school graduates or less (5%), and those who do not identify with a religion (7%).
- Even among groups that have historically supported capital punishment, a preference for the death penalty was noticeably low, including among Republicans (26%), those older than 65 (15%), white voters (24%), Protestants (20%), and those with some college but who did not finish (18%).

The results in Dallas mirror a growing trend away from the death penalty that has been measured in other regions of Texas. According to the [2020 Houston Area Survey](#), conducted by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, when asked to choose their preferred punishment for persons convicted of first-degree murder, only 20% of Houstonians preferred the death penalty for such crimes.

Although Dallas County juries have sentenced more than 100 people to death since the 1970s, the rate of death sentencing has declined significantly over the last decade, reflecting the changing attitudes of jurors and prosecutors. One person has been sentenced to death in Dallas since 2013, mirroring a precipitous drop in use of the death penalty in Texas and nationwide in recent years. Historically, Dallas County ranks second only to Harris County in death sentences (108) and executions (62).

“Voters in Dallas County are sending a strong message that they value fairness and accuracy in the criminal legal system,” said Houlié Cuellar. “As elected leaders confront the legacy of injustice reflected in Dallas’s past use of the death penalty, as well as its troubling history of wrongful convictions, we urge them to take these poll results to heart and to move Dallas further along the path of abandoning the death penalty altogether.”

The [PPP poll](#), which was commissioned by TCADP, has a margin of error of +/- 4.1% at the 95% confidence interval for the full sample. PPP is a nationally recognized polling firm with an A- rating for accuracy and methodology as evaluated by [FiveThirtyEight](#).

TCADP is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization based in Austin.

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