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. Other capital trials were postponed because of the pandemic but some are scheduled to resume in the second half of 2021.

- Death sentences continue to be imposed disproportionately on people of color. Over the last five years, nearly 40% of death sentences have been imposed on Black men.

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

- Since 1973, 185 individuals who spent time on death row have been exonerated. This includes 16 people convicted and sentenced to death in Texas, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.

- The State of Texas has executed 572 people since 1982, accounting for more than one-third of all executions nationwide since 1977. Only Texas, Missouri, and the federal government have carried out executions during the pandemic.

- In 2020, the State of Texas executed three people, the fewest executions since 1996. There have been two executions in Texas to date in 2021, and four more are scheduled for the Fall.

- Currently, there are 199 people on death row in Texas, including 6 women; this is the state’s smallest death row population since 1985.

- 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.

- 23 states (most recently, Virginia) 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 2020, the top five executing countries were China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Egypt.

07/01/21