

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 2021, new death sentences remained in the **single digits** for the seventh year in a row. No one has been sentenced to death in Texas to date in 2022.
- Juries in Bexar, Smith, and Hunt counties accounted for the **three new death sentences** in Texas in 2021.
- Death sentences continue to be imposed disproportionately on people of color. Over the last five years, **40% of death sentences** in Texas have been imposed on Black men even though the Black population of Texas is only 11.8% of residents.
- **Only three counties** in Texas (Harris, Smith, and Walker) have imposed more than one death sentence in the last five years.
- Since 1973, **187 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 **574 people** since 1982, accounting for **more than one-third** of all executions nationwide since 1977.
- **In 2021, the State of Texas executed three people**, matching 2020 for the fewest executions since 1996. Executions were halted in 2021 due to challenges in the courts regarding intellectual disability and religious liberty claims.
- To date in 2022, the State of Texas **has carried out one execution**, putting Carl Wayne Buntion to death on April 21. At 78, Buntion was the **oldest person to be executed by the State of Texas**. He was convicted in 1991 in Harris County. Two other individuals—Michael Gonzales and Melissa Lucio—were **granted stays of execution**.
- Currently, there are **195 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.
- At least **144 countries** have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2021, the top five executing countries were, China, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

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