

The Death Penalty in Bexar County

- New death sentences in Texas have **dropped significantly** since peaking in 1999, when juries sentenced 48 people to death. In 2023, new death sentences remained in the **single digits** for the ninth year in a row.
- Texas juries sent **three new people** to death row in 2023. In two other capital trials, jurors **rejected the death penalty** and sentenced the defendants to life in prison without parole.
- Historically, Bexar County is responsible for the **third highest number of death sentences** (77 total) imposed by juries since 1974, behind only Harris and Dallas Counties; local use of the death penalty has declined sharply, however.
- In August 2021, a Bexar County jury sentenced Otis McKane to death for killing San Antonio Police Detective Benjamin Marconi in 2016. It was the **first new death sentence** imposed in Bexar County in more than five years.
- Between 2009 and 2012, juries in **Bexar County rejected the death penalty** in four capital murder cases. The defendants were sentenced to life in prison without parole.
- Bexar County accounts for **46 of the 586 executions** carried out by the State of Texas since 1982. It falls behind only Harris and Dallas Counties in the number of executions.
- There are **8 individuals** currently on death row who were convicted in Bexar County; five are Hispanic and three are Black.
- **More than 20 people** sentenced to death in Bexar County have been removed from death row; in most cases, their sentences were changed to a lesser penalty.
- Since 1973, **196 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.
- More than **20 people** in Bexar County have been **exonerated of serious crimes** since 2011; many of those exonerations were based on perjury or false accusations.
- There is strong evidence that Ruben Cantu was **wrongfully executed** by the State of Texas on August 24, 1993. His conviction was based largely on the testimony of a single eyewitness who later changed his story. Cantu was 17 at the time of the crime and sentenced to death by a Bexar County jury in 1985.

01/01/24