

Student Name: Cornelia Malafa, 9:10am class
Speech Type: Persuasive Speech.

The Death Penalty

Goal/Purpose

To convince the audience that California should abolish the death penalty.

Introduction

- I. Killing someone! Just the sound of this sentence tells us that it is wrong. The feelings and thoughts streaming into our body tell us that killing is wrong, and killing can never be right. So how come that we support killing people? How come that we allow the state to kill people?
- II. The Death Penalty is a legal sentence in 33 states in The United States, including California. The Death Penalty allows California to execute people who are convicted with first degree murder under special circumstances such as aggravated murder, felony murder, and contract killing. ("Capital Punishment". Wikipedia) DATE? California just voted with 53% against proposition 34, which would have replaced the death penalty with life in prison without ever having the possibility of parole. The death penalty does more bad to our state than good, and it is time for us to fix a broken system and take a step forward.
- III. California should abolish the Death Penalty and replace it with life in prison without ever having the possibility of parole.
 - A. The Death Penalty or also called capital punishment is the legal process of putting a person down to death by the state as a punishment for a crime.
 - B. A life-without-parole means that the convicted person has to spend his or her remaining life in prison.

Body

- I. There are serious problems with the death penalty in California.
 - A. First of all, the Death Penalty is not effective.
 1. Statistics show that the Death Penalty does not prevent or decrease crime. In October 2012 the U.S. Justice Department released the annual FBI Uniform Crime Report for 2011, which shows that the Northeast region, which uses the death penalty the least, had the lowest murder rate of the 4 geographic regions, and saw a 6.4% further decrease in its murder rate in 2011, the largest decrease of any region. By contrast, the South, which carries out more executions than any other region, had the highest murder rate. It saw a small decline from last year.

2. The Death Penalty Information Center released a statistic for 2011 which shows the average Murder Rate of Death Penalty States was 4.7, while the average Murder Rate of States without the Death Penalty was 3.1, comparing the results of the last 12 years shows that non death penalty states always had a lower murder rate than death penalty states.
3. Four of the five states with the highest murder rates are death-penalty states- Louisiana (11.2), Mississippi (8), Maryland (6.8), and North Carolina (6.8). Four of the five states with the lowest murder rates are states without the death penalty- Hawaii(1.2), Vermont(1.3), Rhode Island (1.3), and Minnesota (1.4). ("Murder Facts". Death Penalty Information Center))

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B. Another serious problem is that the Death Penalty costs California enormous amounts of money.

1. Death penalty trials cost more than ordinary trials because they require extra spending's on extra lawyers, investigators and experts for both the prosecution and the defense. ("End the Death Penalty in California". New York Times. Nov. 5th, 2012)
2. The death penalty information center released statistics which show that the housing of life in prison without parole inmate costs California and therefore us taxpayers \$900 000 per inmate per year. The housing of death row inmates cost us an additional \$90 000 in extra securities and services per inmate per year. With California currently having 727 death row inmates this sums up to an additional 65.4 million in housing a year. (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation)
3. The death penalty is costing the state \$137 million a year in legal costs, and life sentences would reduce the costs to just \$11.5 million a year. Just picking a jury in death penalty cases costs \$200,000 more than the amount for non-capital cases. ("Death Penalty Cost". Amnestyusa.org)
4. Although California has the largest death row in the country, it has not carried out an execution in almost 7 years (California has not carried out an execution since 2006.) California has executed 13 inmates since 1978. 83 inmates have died on death row, which basically means we paid an additional amount \$90 000 a years for housing for each of the 83 inmates who have died on the death row, the same way as if they would have been sentences with life in prison without parole. And I am not even mentioning the trial costs for each of the 83 inmates. ("Death Row Facts". Death Penalty Information Center)

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5. Douglas Stankewitz, a Native American, was the first person sent to California's death row after capital punishment was reinstated in 1978. Thirty-four years later, he remains there as his appeals continue. In this 42 years California has paid an additional \$3.7 million in on his housing. ("Death Row Facts". Death Penalty Information Center)

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C. California risks executing Innocent people.

1. Mistakes happen, our system isn't perfect. Our system makes mistakes continuously, and we all know that. So how can we make the risk of killing an innocent person? As long as we continue to have a death penalty, we will risk making the ultimate mistake.
2. 141 people have been exonerated and freed from death row since 1973, and the 18th person released through DNA evidence. ("California Death Penalty Fact Sheet". ACLU of North California)
3. In California alone, more than 200 innocent men and women have been convicted for crimes they did not commit; 3 of them had been sentenced to execution. ("California Death Penalty Fact Sheet". ACLU of North California)
Ernest (Shujaa) Graham got released after he spent 5 years on the Death Row. Troy Lee Jones spent incredible 14 years as an innocent person on the death row, and Oscar Lee Morris spent 17 years on California's death row. ("Exonerations by State". Death Penalty Information Center)

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II. The best solution to the problems I have mentioned is to replace the death penalty without ever having the possibility of parole.

A. It is a practical solution because of the cost factor.

1. California already spent \$4 billion, unnecessary \$4 billion, on the death penalty since 1973. Californians will spend an additional \$5 billion to \$7 billion to fund the broken system between now and 2050. (Assessment of Costs by Judge Arthur Alarcon and Prof. Paula Mitchell, 2012)
2. Replacing the Death with life in prison without the possibility of parole wouldn't cost California anything. California would save a lot of money.

B. It would be easy to implement.

1. All 727 death row inmates would be shifted to life in prison without parole which would already safe California an incredible amount of \$65.4 million just in housing.
2. The inmates as well have to work in prison. The money they make through their work would go to the victim's families.

- C. Replacing the death penalty with life in prison without parole has many benefits.
1. One advantage is that the wasted tax dollars can be used to prevent crime in the first place. The money could help police and other security programs to improve and help our state to become safer. It would improve public safety by committing \$100 million of the expected savings to the investigation of the state's high percentage of unsolved rapes (56 percent) and murders (46 percent). (SOURCE?)
 2. A second advantage is that we wouldn't have the risk of killing innocent people, which happened before. Cameron Todd Willingham is a good example for that. He was convicted to kill his three children in a house fire in 1991. Years after his execution new technology proved that he didn't set the fire, that the fire was an accident. But it was too late, Cameron Todd Willingham has already been killed. ("Cameron Todd Willingham". The Innocence Project)

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Conclusion

- I. In conclusion, my proposition calls for abolishing the death penalty and replacing it with life in prison without ever having the possibility of parole.
 - A. The Death Penalty does not decrease murder rates, it costs enormous amounts of money and it brings the risk of killing innocent people.
 - B. Replacing the death penalty with life in prison without the possibility of parole would safe California a high amount of money which we could use to prevent crime in the first place. It would also eliminate the risk of killing innocent people.
- II. Let me end by saying the following: we live in a modern world. Our lives and our lifestyle have changed a lot after the last decades and we have to adapt our laws and to our modern world. Many death penalty supporters have changed their minds within the last years. Conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly of *Fox News* recently said the following: "Life in prison without parole keeps our families safe and provides legal finality for victims. It also holds criminals accountable by making them work and pay restitution to the victims' compensation instead of enjoying super star status on death row." (SOURCE?)

(I did not attach bibliography.)