

STOP AND STUDY THE DEATH PENALTY

Why Pennsylvania must halt executions and thoroughly analyze capital punishment

Did you know...

...that at least six innocent people have been sentenced to die in Pennsylvania?

There have been six death row exonerations in the Commonwealth since 1986. These six men spent a combined 57 years wrongly imprisoned. Nationwide, 124 people have been exonerated after being sentenced to death. (*Statistics as of December, 2007*)

...that the death penalty may be costing the state's taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars?

No thorough study has been done on the cost of capital punishment in Pennsylvania. However, a recent study in New Jersey found that the state had spent \$250 million for capital punishment. For that investment, New Jersey had ten people on death row, 50 death sentences vacated, and no executions since the 1960s. In contrast, Pennsylvania has more than 200 people on death row, more than 100 death sentences vacated, and three executions in the 1990s. Surely, the taxpayers of the Commonwealth have spent an exorbitant amount of money for a system that is malfunctioning.

...that a committee of the state Supreme Court recommended a moratorium?

In 2003, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Committee on Racial and Gender Bias in the Justice System called on the governor, the legislature, and the courts to impose an immediate moratorium on executions. After spending four years studying the issue, the committee expressed its grave concern that the death penalty is biased against the poor and minorities.

...that an overwhelming majority of those on Pennsylvania's death row were too poor to afford a private attorney at trial?

Nine of every ten people sentenced to die in Pennsylvania were too poor to afford private counsel. An indigent capital defendant can expect legal assistance from either the county public defenders' office, which is typically overworked, underpaid, and woefully lacking in resources, or court-appointed counsel. Pennsylvania is one of two states that does not provide state funding for public defenders.

...that Pennsylvania's death row minority rate is the highest in the nation?

Nearly 70% of those sentenced to die in the Commonwealth are minorities, giving Pennsylvania's death row the look of apartheid-era South Africa.

**THE ACLU OF PA, ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS, AND CONCERNED CITIZENS AROUND
THE STATE BELIEVE THAT PENNSYLVANIA MUST SUSPEND EXECUTIONS UNTIL
THESE ISSUES ARE THOROUGHLY STUDIED**

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF PENNSYLVANIA

P.O. BOX 40008 • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106 • 215-592-1513 • INFO@ACLUPA.ORG
313 ATWOOD STREET • PITTSBURGH, PA 15213 • 412-681-7736 • INFO@ACLUPGH.ORG
P.O. BOX 11761 • HARRISBURG, PA 17108 • 717-238-2258 • HGINFO@ACLUPA.ORG

