

Op-Ed for *Crusade to End the Death Penalty*

Title: The Machinery of Death Has No Place in a Just Society

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The United States remains one of the few democracies on Earth that still carries out executions. This fact alone should trouble our conscience. But the deeper moral crisis is this: our justice system, flawed and fallible, is empowered to end human lives in our name.

As the Executive Director of the Crusade to End the Death Penalty, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, I am committed to one urgent goal: abolishing capital punishment, everywhere and forever. The death penalty is a moral disgrace, a failed public policy, and a stain on the soul of our nation.

It is not a deterrent. It is not cost-effective. It is not fair. And it is not necessary for public safety. What it is, above all, is irreversible.

Since 1973, over 190 individuals have been exonerated from death row. That number alone should give pause to any supporter of capital punishment. If we've sentenced even one innocent person to death, how can we trust the system not to do so again?

The death penalty is soaked in racism. Statistically, those who kill white victims are far more likely to receive a death sentence than those who kill Black victims. Black and brown defendants are disproportionately targeted by prosecutors who know that fear and vengeance can be politically useful tools.

The death penalty is also exorbitantly expensive. From jury selection to decades of appeals and death row housing, it costs millions more than life without parole. That money could support victims' families, expand mental health services, and prevent violence in our communities.

And it is inhumane. Lethal injection is increasingly unreliable and botched. Some states now consider returning to the gas chamber, the firing squad, and other medieval methods. This is not justice. This is moral rot.

The Catholic Church has declared the death penalty "inadmissible" under any circumstances. Pope Francis rightly calls it an attack on the dignity of the person. Major Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders have joined in this condemnation. Religious opposition is not soft-hearted sentimentality—it is a demand for a justice system grounded in mercy, truth, and the possibility of redemption.

What, then, should replace the death penalty? Life without parole, for the most dangerous crimes, is sufficient to protect the public. But beyond punishment, we must pursue

restorative justice—models that lift up victims' voices, confront the harm done, and work toward healing rather than vengeance.

I believe in justice. I believe in accountability. But I do not believe the government should have the power to kill.

If we want a more humane, more trustworthy justice system, we must start by ending executions. The machinery of death has no place in a society that claims to value life.

To join the movement, visit www.crusadetoendthedeathpenalty.org. Stand with us. Speak out. And pray for a day when the death penalty is no more.