

The case against capital punishment

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The death penalty or capital punishment refers to the imposition of death on a person through judicial processes as mode of retribution for offences committed. Crimes which can lead to the imposition of capital punishment are usually referred to as capital offences (Friends Committee on National Legislation). Emotions in the United States are strongly divided on the issue. Amnesty International one of the greatest opponents of the death penalty believes the capital punishment to be “ the definitive denunciation of human rights, a deliberate and cold blooded murder of a human at the altar of justice. It a violation of the right to life being ultimately cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

” Edward Koch a prominent anti capital punishment activist said that “ it is by exacting the highest penalty for the taking of human life that we assert the highest value of human life” One of the most profound arguments against the death penalty is the certainty that in some instances some innocents will suffer capital punishment with no avenue of compensation in case this is discovered later. Most of the time, the innocence or guilt is left to the skills of the defense and prosecution lawyers (Friends Committee on National Legislation). Justice Ginsburg of the USSupremecourt admitted that she had never seen a death penalty case which was submitted to the Supreme Court for a stay having had good representation at the trial stage. Opponents of capital punishment argue against it o the effect it has on the society. The Friends Committee on National Legislation believes that “ capital punishment destroys the belief in human capacity for change.

It intimates the idea of capital punishment as a good way of reacting to those causing offence as opposed to forgiveness for healthier relationships”.

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James W. L. Park a former officer of executions said he did not see anywhere in the bible the quest for revenge as a high calling for Christians instead he saw forgiveness (Hood 212). Rev Joseph who was the president of the National Conference of Catholic bishops said “ we oppose capital punishment not only for its effect on the offenders but also because of the illusion of defending life by taking life that it gives us” Contrary to popular perceptions, capital punishment does not act as a deterrent for capital offences. Opponents have offered conclusive data that shows that the death penalty actually increases the death rate.

A 1998 United Nations Research was of the conclusion that there was sufficient scientific proof of the preventive effect of capital punishment (Hood 238). Crime in the US a publication of the FBI reported said “ In no state has the number of murders has not gone down in any of the states which legalized the death penalty” Capital punishment as a mode of punishment is slowly but surely losing ground as more and more people recognize its ineffectiveness as a deterrent, its negative societal effects, and the possibility of condemning innocent people to an untimely death.