

Capital punishment – is the death penalty effective? essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The death penalty is not an effective way to prevent or reduce crime. It risks the lives of innocent people and costs much more than a life sentence. The emotional impulse for revenge is not a sufficient justification for invoking a system of capital punishment, with all its accompanying problems and risks. The overwhelming conclusion from years of deterrence studies is that the death penalty is no more of a deterrent than a sentence of life in prison. According to www.deathpenalty.org, in the US, states without the death penalty have had consistently lower murder rates. Scientific studies have continually failed to demonstrate that executions deter people from committing crime any more than long prison sentences. The South accounts for 80% of US executions and has the highest regional murder rate. Research reported in *Homicide Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1997, indicates that executions may actually increase the number of murders, rather than deter murders. Many people favor the death penalty as reparation for the wrong done to a victim's family; however, in most cases, closure is not the result. This isn't justice in the traditional sense, but retribution. Encouraging our basest motives of revenge, which ends in another killing, extends the chain of violence. Allowing executions sanctions killing as a form of 'pay-back.' Although our first instinct may be to inflict immediate pain on someone who wrongs us, the standards of a mature society demand a more measured response. Various people who are opposed to the death penalty say that capital punishment condemns the innocent to die. According to Amendment V in the United States Bill of Rights, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital crime, or otherwise infamous crime unless on a presentment of an indictment of a grand jury". While it is true that a few innocent people have "

slipped through the cracks” of the justice system and have been convicted and executed unfairly, it is extremely rare that this type of situation would happen. By the time that all appeals are exhausted, it is most likely that the attorneys will find new evidence to support alleged criminal’s innocence from examining the case so many times. The death penalty is much more expensive than life without parole because the Constitution requires a long and complex judicial process for capital cases.

If the death penalty was replaced with a sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole, which costs millions less and also ensures that the public is protected while eliminating the risk of an irreversible mistake, the money saved could be spent on programs that actually improve the communities in which we live. The millions of dollars in savings could be spent on: education, roads, police officers and public safety programs, after-school programs, drug and alcohol treatment, child abuse prevention programs, mental health services, and services for crime victims and their families. The only true fact about the usefulness of a death penalty is the fact that many people feel that killing convicted murderers will satisfy their need for justice and/or vengeance. Even though some people feel relieved when the murderer is executed, there is no way to reverse the crime(s) that he has committed. It comes down to whether we should keep a system for the sake of retribution or revenge even though it isn’t effective in reducing violent crime, costs much more than alternatives and, worst of all, can lead to the execution of someone for a crime he didn’t commit.