

The positive effect of capital punishment in modern america

[Law](#), [Capital Punishment](#)



Ronnie Kuester Dr. Borgmeyer Eng. Comp. II 30 Sept. 2010 The Positive Effect of Capital Punishment in Modern America “ I don’t think you should support the death penalty to seek revenge. I don’t think that’s right. I think the reason to support the death penalty is because it saves other people’s lives” (Bush). Capital punishment is one of the most controversial topics in the American society and is also one of the topics most people feel very emotional about. Everyone feels that their views are correct because there are many pros and cons to either side.

Although some people believe the risk of executing the innocent is too great, the use of capital punishment has greatly impacted our society in a positive way because of its deterring effect, economic benefits, and the prevailing of justice. The deterrent effect is definitely one of the biggest benefits to having capital punishment. When people have the knowledge that they could be executed for killing someone else it often turns them away from committing the murder. Tanner from Fort-Worth Star Telegram thinks that the deterrent effect has shown to prevent between three and eighteen murders (Wood 601).

Most people in modern America have heard of the death penalty, yet they still commit the crimes that are punishable by death. Since people know about it and still do it, they are basically accepting the sentence, unless they are mentally ill and in which cause do not get sentenced to death. Naci Mocan’s study, from the University of Colorado, suggest that, “ Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that show capital punishment has deterrent effects” (Wood 602). Abolitionists argue that the

deterrent effect is only estimates and are not actually proven to deter murders.

However, knowing, through many studies, that three to eighteen innocent people could be saved by executing each convicted killer greatly outweighs the benefits to letting the murderer off the hook. Although, the deterrent effect is the greatest benefit to having capital punishment, the economic problem is also very important. A suggested alternative to the death penalty is life in prison without parole. This upsets many of the taxpayers, as it should. An article in *The Economist* states, "the idea of spending public money to feed and clothe murderers for the rest of their lives seemed outrageous" (*Economist* 605).

Is there a difference to sentencing life in prison or executing someone? In the end they die a captive man. It is delaying the inevitable, but not many people see that. It is not very fair giving man his freedoms after he has taken the lives of others. He himself has not respected the life and liberty that all people should have. Once you take away someone's life yours should be taken in return. That is, only if it is murder in the first degree and the murder was committed intentionally. After being sentenced to life without parole their court dates are not done.

Money keeps getting wasted in the courts after the sentencing. Most convicts are still trying to get a reduced sentence or get parole. Convicts going through trials for the death penalty and life in prison often have to wait a very long time, which in the process is spending a lot of the tax payers' money. Either way, life in prison or the death penalty on average they wait a

decade before a decision is made or the execution is carried out. Other than deterring crime and being economically beneficial, capital punishment also allows justice to prevail.

Justice seems to always prevail, but in some instances, this is not the case. However, no innocent human has been executed through the use of DNA testing. Only the convicts who commit the worst, most heinous of crimes are even put on death row. Abolitionists see that the government is just killing someone. However, like the quote at the beginning, the government does not have the death penalty just to seek revenge. That is not what the death penalty is about. It is about justice being served and letting people know that murdering will not be acceptable.

The government does not execute people to flaunt its power, Foucault agrees when he states, " It is ugly to be punishable, there is no glory in punishing"(Foucault 10). It is because of this that America, along with many other nations, has done away with torturing as well. The government does respect points of the abolitionists saying it is not right torturing the convicts or causing extreme pain. They have changed their ways making the execution more humane. In our modern society we do not torture death row inmates anymore.

Foucault states that, " today we are rather inclined to ignore it; perhaps, in its time, it gave rise to too much inflated rhetoric; perhaps it has been attributed too readily and too emphatically to a process of ' humanization', thus dispensing with the need for further analysis"(Foucault 7). It was thought that torture was a corrective procedure that if they were tortured

they would not commit the crime again. However, it is viewed as inhumane to inflict pain on an individual to teach them discipline, especially if they are being put to death anyway. So now we use more humane ways to put people to death that involve little to no pain.

Lethal injection is the most modern and safe way to put someone to death. It was first used in 1977 in Oklahoma but took five years before it was used on someone. All of the states except one that have the death penalty use lethal injection. The inmate being executed is bound down and has his heart being monitored. Then, they insert two needles into the veins injecting the inmate with Sodium Thiopental. This is an anesthetic which renders the inmate unconscious. " Next flows pavulon or Pancuronium Bromide, which paralyzes the entire muscle system and stops the inmate's breathing. Finally, the flow of potassium chloride stops the heart.

Death results from anesthetic overdoses and respiratory and cardiac arrest while the condemned person is unconscious" (Methods). This technique used does not hurt the inmate, which is one of the reasons abolitionists are upset about the death penalty. As for any other method, they get pretty painful and or messy. Death by electrocution, hanging, and gas chamber are all extremely painful and do not kill the inmate right away. Not only does justice prevail through the government when someone is executed but also people get a religious satisfaction. The Bible specifically states that the death penalty is alright. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"(Genesis 9: 6). The reason why it is believed people should be executed for killing another human beings

because we were made in God's image and destroying or killing that is major offense to God. The Bible also informs its readers that none shall take ransom or money in exchange for the murderer's life. This is where the justice comes into play. God does not want the government taking money in exchange for someone's life. In modern day terms it would be equivalent to posting bail or just receiving a fine.

That would be unrealistic to do in the case of a murderer being put to death. Abolitionists believe that we should not play God and only those who have not sinned be the ones to judge and "cast the first stone" so to speak. What most do not realize is that, according to the Bible, God thinks that these murderers should be killed. God is not going to just smite them down. Humans figured out and have interpreted the Bible and its meanings when saying these things about the death penalty. Most abolitionists greatest problem with the death penalty is executing the innocent. Executing the innocent is extremely rare.

Hundreds of people have been released from death row due to DNA testing proving their innocence. This does not mean that they were executed. It is excellent that these people were not wrongly executed and it is because of modern technology that it can be appreciated. However, executing those who have been, without a doubt guilty of committing murder in the first degree should be executed. Throughout the use of DNA testing to possibly help the case of either side, there have been zero cases where an innocent human has been executed. Abolitionists keep seeing that the death penalty is still used despite the way they feel.

So they begin to say things like, "Killing a murderer does not bring his victim back to life. It achieves nothing but the death of still another person"(Robinson). As stated at the beginning of this paper, by having the death penalty be legal it deters certain crime, has economic benefits, and it allows justice to be served. No matter what abolitionists are doing, most of their ideas keep getting shot down. There is a reason the majority has always sided with the death penalty, because it just helps out our modern American society.

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