

# An eye for an eye

Business



For many centuries, the death penalty has been enforced by numerous great civilizations and societies—The Ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Aztecs, etc., the Code of Hammurabi—in order to effectively maintain justice. However, in the recent years it is evident that there is a growing controversy of the necessity of capital punishment with the bitter back-and-forth disputes for and against the death penalty, mainly from lawyers, be it a defense attorney or prosecutor, families of homicide victims, or victims of crimes so severe as to enforce the death penalty. Its opponents (defense attorneys, etc.

) not only believe that killing is murder, regardless of whether it is done by the government or illegally by a civilian, and is under no circumstances justifiable, but also that the cost of the death sentence is more expensive than life in prison. Nevertheless, its supporters (victims, victims' families) understand the necessity for such a punishment to exist in order to maintain justice. The fact remains that capital punishment deters crime, and ultimately saves lives. The claim that capital punishment costs more money than the alternative (life in prison), is actually true in terms of federal spending. The Death Penalty Information Center contains information stating that “ the average cost of defending a trial in a federal death case is.... about 8 times that of a federal murder case in which the death penalty is not sought” (“ Update on Cost”).

Although this argument appears to be in the opposing view's favor, should the amount of money used for the death penalty be the United States' only concern? Basically, its opponents wish to abolish capital punishment on the grounds that taxpayers would not squander their hard earned money on something as foolish as justice; in other words, when it comes to finances,

people would rather spend it on something more meaningful than saving lives. Although its opponents argue this an invalid conclusion, there are several studies indicating the crime deterrent effect of capital punishment.

For example, Paul Connors, in opposition to the death penalty, claims “ studies cannot ‘ prove’ capital punishment deters crime” (Connors).

However, in an excerpt from David B. Mulhaussen’s essay, it is clearly stated that by “ using a panel data set of over 3, 000 counties from 1977 to 1996, Professors Hashem Dezhbakhsn, Paul R.

Rubin, and Joanna M. Shepherd of Emory University found that each execution, on average, results in 18 fewer murders” (Mulhaussen). From the information provided, it is clear that the execution of those proven guilty results in saving lives of others; he provides a specific study revealing that one execution saves 18 lives. Evidently, the study reveals the deterrent effects of the punishment in relation to the homicide rates in a representative sample of over 3, 000 counties. In his desperate attempt to disprove that capital punishment reduces crime, Connors questions researchers when writing that according to “ a 2003 paper by Hashem Dezhbakhsh and others...each execution saves 18 lives...another study ‘ proves’ each execution saves 14 lives; another proves that only five lives are saved; yet another claims three are saved” (Connors).

Although he is not to be blamed for questioning the various studies, each one provided here does in fact support the claim that the death penalty indeed saves lives, whether it be three or 18. He practically disproves his own argument by providing several examples of the deterrent effect of capital punishment; after all, is not the main objective of such a disciplinary <https://assignbuster.com/an-eye-for-an-eye/>

action to preserve and ensure the protection of as many lives as possible from harm, even if only one life is spared? As long as others are kept from dying, the overall purpose is fulfilled no matter what variations occur. In conclusion, it is evident that the death penalty is necessary to maintain justice, and most importantly, save lives. The death sentence is an irrefutable deterrent of crime (at least on an individual level), for once executed, the convict can no longer commit any crimes nor cause any harm to others. Also, there are indeed several studies indicating that one execution can result in sparing multiple lives, thus giving us citizens of the U.

S. cause to keep the death penalty enforced. Works Cited " A Continuing Conflict: A History of Capital Punishment in the United States." Capital Punishment: Cruel and Unusual?. Kim Masters Evans.

2008 ed. Detroit: Gale, 2008. Information Plus Reference Series. Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context. Web.

24 Jan. 2011. " Federal Costs." Death Penalty Information Center. 2010.

Web. 24 Feb. 2011. Muhlhausen, David B. " The Death Penalty Deters Crime." Crime and Criminals.

Ed. James D. Torr. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2010. Opposing Viewpoints. Gale Opposing Viewpoints In Context.

Web. 15 Nov. 2010. Office of Defender Services of the Administrative Office of the U. S.

Courts, " Update on Cost, Quality, and Availability of Defense Representation in Federal Death Penalty Cases," June 2008; prepared by Jon Gould and Lisa Greenman. " Studies Cannot " Prove" Capital Punishment Deters Crime." Current Controversies; Capital Punishment. Paul Connors. Detroit: Greenhouse Press, 2008.

Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. Gale. AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL-Sugar land FBISD. 24 Jan. 2011.