

# Is the Death Penalty a Fair Punishment?

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All over the world, criminals are sentenced to death for their crimes. Many people wonder if it's a fair punishment. The death penalty is not fair because it is inhumane, can be discriminatory for certain groups, and cannot be undone if there was a mistake.

First of all it can be discriminatory for certain groups, studies actually show that mentally ill, people color, and the poor make up the majority of the death row inmates. In the United States 5-10% of prisoners on the death row have a severe mental illness, and over 40% of the prisoners with a death sentence are African American, according to Mental Health America (Human Rights Careers, 2021). Also, according to the United Nations ( Human Rights Careers, 2021), the poor are disproportionately affected by the death penalty on a global scale. So, there forth they are least likely to get a good representative and the system is biased against them. Even though these groups aren't committing the most crimes they are getting the most severe punishment.

In addition to being discriminating, it's also inhumane. The international rights treaty - The Convention Against Torture, (Human Rights Carrer, 2021), is intended to prevent actions considered inhumane. While the convention doesn't take a clear stance on the death penalty, many believe executions fall under the type of punishment described in the document. In the United States, research shows that 3% of executions between 1890- 2010 were "botched." What does it mean to "botch" an execution? It basically causes severe suffering to the prisoner. Lethal injection has the highest rate of error despite being the most "humane" - and most common- option. When injections go wrong, it can take a long time for a prisoner to die. Exams after death, show serious chemical burns and other injuries. Opponents of the death penalty say this demonstrates cruel and inhumane punishments.

And, for my last reason, it can't be undone if new evidence is revealed. What makes the death penalty distinct from life in prison is that the judgement can't be reversed. It's a final punishment. However what if new evidence is

discovered and it turns out the prisoner was innocent? In technologies like DNA testing have played a big role. If timing and circumstances had been different, prisoners would have died for a crime they didn't commit. How many other death row inmates are at risk for unjust execution? Even if they aren't all innocent, a dive into their cases could reveal discrimination inadequate representation, and other issues that would prove they didn't receive a fair trial. In a society where the legal system can't be relied on for justice, the death penalty is too serious a punishment.

In conclusion the death penalty is an unfair punishment, it's inhumane, goes against one of the ten commandments, it's discriminatory to certain groups, and can't be undone if there was a mistake.

# Bibliography

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