

Death Penalty Discussion

Is the Death Penalty Right or Wrong?

The idea of putting another human to death is hard to completely fathom. The physical mechanics involved in the act of execution are easy to grasp, but the emotions involved in carrying out a death sentence on another person, regardless of how much they deserve it, is beyond my own understanding. I know it must be painful, dehumanizing, and sickening. However, this act is sometimes necessary and it is our responsibility as a society to see that it is done.

Opponents of capital punishment have basically four arguments. The first is that there is a possibility of error. However, the chance that there might be an error is separate from the issue of whether the death penalty can be justified or not. If an error does occur, and an innocent person is executed, then the problem lies in the court system, not in the death penalty. Furthermore, most activities in our world, in which humans are involved, possess a possibility of injury or death. Construction, sports, driving, and air travel all offer the possibility of accidental death even though the highest levels of precautions are taken. These activities continue to take place, and continue to occasionally take human lives, because we have all decided, as a society, that the advantages outweigh the unintended loss. We have also decided that the advantages of having dangerous murderers removed from our society outweigh the losses of the offender.

The second argument against capital punishment is that it is unfair in its administration. Statistics show that the poor and minorities are more likely to receive the death penalty. Once again, this is a separate issue.

It can't be disputed sadly, the rich are more likely to get off with a lesser sentence, and this bias is wrong. However, this is yet another problem of our current court system. The racial and economic bias is not a valid argument against the death penalty. It is an argument against the courts and their unfair system of sentencing.

The third argument is actually a rebuttal to a claim made by some supporters of the death penalty. The claim is that the threat of capital punishment reduces violent crimes. Opponents of the death penalty do not agree and have a valid argument when they say, "The claims that capital punishment reduces violent crime is inconclusive and certainly not proven."

I am not refuting this accusation. In fact, statistics show that the

death penalty neither lowers or raises the incidence of violent crimes. I am not a supporter of the death penalty because it might scare potential criminals into thinking twice before they murdered someone (though it would be nice if it did). I support the death penalty because it removes individuals who threaten the lives of our citizens.

The fourth argument is that the length of stay on death row, with its endless appeals, delays, technicalities, and retrials, keep a person waiting for death for years on end. It is both cruel and costly. This is the least credible argument against capital punishment. The main cause of such inefficiencies is the appeals process, which allows capital cases to bounce back and forth between state and federal courts for years on end. If supporting a death row inmate for the rest their life costs less than putting them to death, and ending their financial burden on society, then the problem lies in the court system, not in the death penalty. As for the additional argument, that making a prisoner wait for years to be executed is cruel, then would not waiting for death in prison for the rest of your life be just as cruel, as in the case of life imprisonment without parole.

Many Americans will tell you why they are in favor of the death penalty. It is what they deserve. It prevents them from ever murdering again. It removes the burden from taxpayers. We all live in a society with the same basic rights and guarantees. We have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with equal opportunities. This is the basis for our society. It is the foundation on which everything else is built upon. When someone willfully and flagrantly attacks this foundation by murdering another, robbing them of all they are, and all they will ever be, then that person can no longer be a part of this society. The only method that completely separates cold blooded murderers from our society is the death penalty.

As the 20th century comes to a close, it is evident that our justice system is in need of reform. This reform will shape the future of our country, and we can not jump to quick solutions such as the elimination of the death penalty. As of now, the majority of American support the death penalty as an effective solution of punishment. Until this opinion becomes the minority, America will continue to use the this approach, and I will continue to support the death penalty.

"An eye for an eye," are what some Americans would say concerning the death penalty. Supporters of the death penalty ask the question, "Why should I, an honest hardworking taxpayer, have to pay to support a murderer for the rest of their natural life? Why not execute them and save society the cost of their keep?" Many Americans believe that the death penalty is wrong. However, it seems obvious to some Americans that the death penalty is a just and proper way to handle convicted murderers.