

Opinion on the Death Penalty

The death penalty, also referred to as capital punishment, has been abolished in Canada since 1976, but still exist in a few American States. The last execution in Canada took place in 1962.

I disagree with the death penalty for several reasons. My first reason is that I find it extremely inhumane to take someone's life in order to demonstrate the power of the law. Another reason for my disapproval of the death penalty, is the amount of money that it takes to put someone to death, as it would cost the same to keep an inmate in jail for life, as it would to put that same inmate to death. My third and final reason, is the guilty conscience that is placed on everyone involved: the jury who convicted the accused to death; the witnesses to the execution; and the jail warden who must give out the execution; and the person who pulls the switch or induces the poison.

Early societies were based on a simple code of law: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". Today, now that our society has become more advanced, we do not function by this ancient code of punishment. For example, we do not rape the rapist's daughter; we do not kidnap the kidnapper's children; but if the death penalty were permitted, we would "kill the killer". So why, as educated citizens, would we want to lower ourselves to this level? Do we feel that we need to show the power of the police force by killing the killers? The death penalty is extremely barbaric and is often botched in order to let the accused suffer for several minutes. Society by now must realize that two wrongs certainly do not make a right. You do not show society anything, by killing the killers, except your ignorance for human life and well being.

Some thought has been that if you do "kill the killer", it will deter others from committing such a terrible crime. However, murder rates in Canada have remained the same and there is no significant difference when comparisons are made of those States who still have the death penalty. A widely publicized execution might reduce homicides, but only for a brief period. Therefore, I do not feel that Canada should permit such a deplorable undertaking of a human life. I know they must be punished, but there is a better way.

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Prior to putting someone to death, the accused's lawyer will attempt several appeals to the courts in order to lengthen the amount of time he has to live; and dependent on a technicality, or a sympathetic jury, the accused may be sentenced to life imprisonment. These appeals take up an abundance of court time and cost the public millions of dollars. With the cost of these appeals, it would cost the same amount to keep the same inmate in jail for a life term. Would it not be better for the inmate to perhaps obtain an education or be given the chance to rehabilitate, rather than strapped to a chair and killed ??? I personally would rather see the inmate suffer in prison and have nothing to look forward to rather than letting the government put him out of his misery by killing him. To sentence someone to death takes one trial but to actually get some one in the chair to kill them could take a dozen of trials. The question must be asked why do we bother with this lengthy and costly process when we could sentence people to life in prison, at the same cost.

The killing of a human being is very traumatizing to all. Whenever the courts issue someone to death, the innocent everyday people who are involved must be

affected. Just imagine how these normal human beings, like you and I, must feel after witnessing a gruesome killing of another human being. These people will never forget the face on the person that they saw being gassed, electrocuted, or poisoned. The prison wardens who must carry out the killing of the sentenced inmate must deal with the emotional problems that performing this act will accompany. Also the jury must convict the accused and then sentence this person, whom they have never seen in their life, to death. These twelve men and women are put in a position to decide if this person should spend the next twenty-five years in prison or should he be sentenced to death. Would you like to be put into this situation? I know I sure wouldn't.

Another issue is what if a person has been convicted and sentenced to death, and two minutes after the execution, new evidence comes out of nowhere that proves he is innocent of all charges. How do you pay back this poor person's family? A long liable suit would follow, but I'm sure all the money in the world would not bring back their family member. What are the police officers going to do? They thought that they had the right person for the crime and now, with new evidence, they were proven wrong. The death penalty is so final, and it cannot bring a life back, no matter what the circumstances are.

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In conclusion, I feel that the death penalty should remain abolished in Canada and should also be abolished in the United States as well. The death penalty is a barbaric and inhumane form of punishment. Capital punishment has a very costly and lengthy appeals process attached to it, and is not very economically smart. Also carrying out the killing of someone leaves extremely deep emotional scars that do not go away overnight. People who witness the killing are probably scarred for life, plagued with nightmares and they will never forget the face on the accused as he was receiving his punishment. By taking someone's life, you too have become a "killer"; no matter what the circumstances. I simply believe it is not right.