

This is a short rundown of arguments against capital punishment and data to back them up. I will be focusing on the United States, as that is where I could find data (although there will be a couple of international ones). Any other data you have on the subject, please PM at [u/Albamc35](#).

It does not deter murder

- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/files/DeterrenceStudy2009.pdf>
 - Looks at the opinions of leading criminologists on the topic of the death penalty deterring murder
 - 88.2% of the respondents said no to the question: *“Do you feel that the death penalty acts as a deterrent to the commitment to murder—that it lowers the murder rate, or not?”*
 - In 1996, 83.6% said no to that question, so consensus has been consistent
- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/does-the-death-penalty-re_b_13362760
 - *“We found that among the 25 states with the highest murder rate, 20 have the death penalty”*
 - *“Among the 25 states with low murder rates, 11 have the death penalty”*
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/murder-rates/murder-rate-of-death-penalty-states-compared-to-non-death-penalty-states>
 - *“The murder rate in non-death penalty states has remained consistently lower than the rate in states with the death penalty, and the gap has grown since 1990”*
 - *“During the last 20 years, the homicide rate in states with the death penalty has been 48% - 101% higher than in states without the death penalty”*
- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/documents/NatResCouncil-Deterr.pdf>
 - A panel of the National Academy of Sciences unanimously concluded that there was no credible evidence that the death penalty deters homicides
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/study-international-data-shows-declining-murder-rates-after-abolition-of-death-penalty>

- Examined murder rates in 11 countries that have abolished capital punishment
- Finds that ten of those countries experienced a decline in murder rates in the decade following abolition
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1994.tb01148.x>
 - Looks at Oklahoma, where the death penalty was abolished then put back in
 - Finds death penalty is not a deterrent
- [http://users.nber.org/~jwolfers/papers/DeathPenalty\(SLR\).pdf](http://users.nber.org/~jwolfers/papers/DeathPenalty(SLR).pdf) (cited)
 - Suggests that the deterrence argument should be taken out of the death penalty debate
- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/pdf/CostsRptFinal.f1560295688.pdf>
 - A poll of police chiefs rank the death penalty at the bottom of their priorities for safer societies
 - They say the death penalty in the U.S. is an enormously expensive and wasteful program with no clear benefits
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.law.uchicago.edu/files/files/JELS%2520Singapore-HK%2520Final.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiM2tGU4ePqAhVpUBUIHVrBCy0QFjAAegQIARAB&usg=AOvVaw2VLoqeofKl_XRtw70IDWxu&cshid=1595520577406
 - Study in Hong Kong (who abolished the death penalty in the 90s) and Singapore (who increased use of it)
 - Finds no detectable effect on crime with use of death penalty

It is racist

- <https://www.uky.edu/AS/PoliSci/Peffley/pdf/Eberhardt.2006.Psych%20Sci.Looking%20Deathworthy.pdf>
 - Black defendants who possessed darker skin and more “stereotypically black” features were twice as likely to be given the death penalty when accused of murdering a white person, as compared to lighter-skinned blacks with less “stereotypically black” features.
 - This disparity disappears completely when the murder victim is black
- <https://tcadp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Texas-Death-Penalty-Developments-in-2018-final-print-version.pdf>
 - *“All seven men sentenced to death in Texas in 2018 are people of color”*

- *“Over the last five years, more than 70% of death sentences [in Texas] have been imposed on defendants of color”*
- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/documents/WashRaceStudy2014.pdf>
 - Black defendants are 4.5 times as likely to receive a death sentence as similarly-situated whites
 - Other factors (presence of aggravating circumstances, involvement of sex crimes, hostage-taking, etc.) explain only a small fraction of the disparity in prosecutors’ and juries’ decision to invoke the death penalty against black defendants
- https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/dag/legacy/2000/09/13/_dp_survey_final.pdf
 - U.S. Attorneys recommended the death penalty in 36% of the cases with black defendants and non-black victims, but only recommended the death penalty in 20 % of the cases with black defendants and black victims
 - From 1995-2000, 80% of all the federal capital cases recommended by U.S. Attorneys to the Attorney General seeking the death penalty involved people of color
- https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/md_death_penalty_race_study.pdf (cited)
 - Twelve men, eight of them black, are on Maryland's death row. In each case, the murder victim was white, and that specific factor strongly influenced a prosecutor's decision to pursue a capital case
 - *“Offenders who kill white victims, especially if the offender is black, are significantly and substantially more likely to be charged with a capital crime”*
 - The probability is twice as high as when a black slays another black
- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/documents/DonohueCTStudy.pdf>
 - Black defendants receive death sentences at three times the rate of white defendants in cases where the victims were white.
 - Killers of white victims are treated more severely than people who kill minorities, when it comes time to decide the charges.
 - Minorities who kill whites receive death sentences at higher rates than minorities who kill minorities.
- <https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2741&context=clr>
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/files/pdf/2018TennesseeDeathPenaltyLottery.pdf>
 - Finds the facts of the crime did not predict whether a death sentence would be imposed

- Alongside the quality of the defense, and the views of the prosecutors and judges assigned to the case, race was one of the biggest predictors of getting the death penalty
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/files/pdf/CaRaceStudy.pdf>
 - Although more Hispanics and African Americans are victims of murder in California, white-victim cases are the ones most likely to end in a death sentence
 - Those who kill non-Latino whites are more than three times more likely to be sentenced to die as those who kill African-Americans.
 - Those who kill non-Latino whites are more than four times more likely to be sentenced to die as those who kill Latinos.
 - A person convicted of the same crime is more than three times more likely to be sentenced to die simply because the crime was committed in a predominantly white, rural community rather than a diverse, urban area
- https://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/national/20080429_sidebar_study.pdf (cited)
 - The odds of a death trial are 1.75 times higher against black defendants than white defendants, adjusting for many variables

It is expensive

[Amnesty International](#) have good studies on it, which I will link down here

- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/documents/deathpenalty.pdf>
 - In Tennessee, death penalty trials cost an average of 48% more than the average cost of trials in which prosecutors seek life imprisonment
- <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2981/5daf99ef101a39609de843bbf7f2d3659563.pdf>
 - In Kansas, the estimated cost of a death penalty case was 70% more than the cost of a comparable non-death penalty case
 - Death penalty case costs were counted through to execution (median cost \$1.26 million). Non-death penalty case costs were counted through to the end of incarceration (median cost \$740,000)
 -
- https://www.urban.org/research/publication/cost-death-penalty-maryland/view/full_report

- In Maryland, death penalty cases cost 3 times more than non-death penalty cases, or \$3 million for a single case
- It cost the taxpayer at least \$37.2 million for each of just five executions since the death penalty was re-enacted in 1978
- <https://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=ncippubs>
 - In California, the current system costs \$137 million per year
 - It would cost \$11.5 million for a system without the death penalty
- <https://scholarlycommons.susqu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=supr>
 - On average, across all 50 states, a death row inmate costs \$1.12 million more than a general population inmate
- <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/pennsylvania-death-penalty-costs-estimated-at-350-million>
 - The cases of the 185 people on Pennsylvania's death row is estimated to cost \$351.5 million
- <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/documents/CookCostRpt.pdf>
 - North Carolina: *"Thus abolition of the death penalty would have reduced state expenditures on murder cases by about \$10.8 million per year"*

Logical Arguments

- As much as I think Jordan Peterson is [wrong quite alot](#), he does have something very convincing to say about capital punishment. In [this interview in the Rubin Report](#), Peterson says that you can believe that a criminal deserves to die, but not believe the state should have that power to decide. Good argument against Libertarians and anti-big government people.
- Although new technology may help in solving crimes, new technologies like [genetic editing](#), [deepfakes](#) on video evidence, and more, could make it harder to figure out who did the crime, leading to more innocents being executed.

Other resources

Debunks of [PragerU's video](#) on it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXOES5CnDB8>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMclVIR1_0w

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L30_hfuZoQ8

Other Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kye2oX-b39E>

Anti death penalty advocacy and research groups:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/death-penalty/>

<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/>

<http://www.ncadp.org/>

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/capital-punishment>