

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN MEDICAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Resolution:
(NC-25)

Introduced by: Skylynn Thangwaritorn, California Health Sciences University; Xianzhen Deng, California Health Sciences University

Subject: Opposition to the Use of Capital Punishment

Referred to: Resolutions Committee
(Xianzhen Deng, Director of Organized Medicine)

Whereas, On December 17th, 2024 the United Nations General Assembly's 10th resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty passed by a two thirds vote in which the US has continued to vote against;¹ and

Whereas, Within the US the number of people on death row has declined since hitting peak population in 2000 with just 4 states responsible for the majority of the executions;² and

Whereas, Historically, the Trump administration has executed the most prisoners in history since the US Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in 1976;³ and

Whereas, The death penalty carries with it the inherent risk of wrongfully convicting the innocent, as demonstrated by at least 200 exonerations from death row since 1973;⁴ and

Whereas, An outcome of the death sentence for prisoners has been “unfair, arbitrary and racially biased” as can be shown by the majority of wrongful conviction exonerees being of the Black or Latinx population as compared to less than 60% of official misconduct in white exonerees;^{4,5,6} and

Whereas, This racial bias is due in part to the illegal racial discrimination in jury selection that excludes black people and other people of color by utilizing the principle of the 10% cutoff for significant underrepresentation and tolerating jury pools that fail to enforce the required law of proportionate representation within the jury pool that matches the representation in the overall population, as detailed in the Equal Justice Initiative 2021 report;^{7,8} and

Whereas, Furthermore, people of color continue to be underrepresented within prosecutors' offices and in the judiciary, with about 95% white elected prosecutors, whereas people of color comprise more than 40% of Americans;⁷ and

Whereas, Moreover whether a prisoner is handed capital punishment also depends on a factor of geographical arbitrariness in which only 2% of counties are responsible for more than half of all executions since 1976;^{9, 10} and

Whereas, Capital punishment has not been proven to be a sufficient deterrent against crime and further perpetuates the cycle of violence and trauma for the relatives of those executed by the State;^{9,11} and

Whereas, Additionally, the data has shown paradoxically that murder rates are consistently higher in states upholding the death penalty than in states where the death penalty has been

abolished and that these states that have abolished the death penalty since 2000 have lower rates of police murders;¹² and

Whereas, Prisoners may spend upwards of a decade or more awaiting their execution with the majority of their time spent alone with a myriad of restrictions for all intents and purposes of what is essentially solitary confinement;¹³ and

Whereas, In comparison to life imprisonment without the change of parole, capital punishment is far more expensive for the American taxpayer at about \$137 million per year versus \$11.5 million for lifetime imprisonment;^{9, 14} and

Whereas, As of 2024, a Gallup poll found support for the death penalty continues to wane as today's younger generation are less likely than older generations to support capital punishment with overall support for the death penalty falling to just 53%;^{15, 16} and

Whereas, Likewise, capital punishment may further serve as solely a rhetoric for the perception of a "tough on crime" stance, which may, in actuality distract policymakers from drafting and enacting more effective and equitable public safety measures;⁹ therefore be it

RESOLVED, That APAMSA affirms the Fifth Amendment right that no person shall be deprived of life without due process of law; and be it further

RESOLVED, That APAMSA recognizes the racial bias of the justice system and the arbitrary nature of capital punishment sentencing; and be it further

RESOLVED, That APAMSA supports all efforts to enact more equitable policies towards crime; and be it further

RESOLVED, That APAMSA advocates for a fair and just criminal justice system with criminal justice reforms; and be it further

RESOLVED, That APAMSA condemns the continued implementation and sentencing of capital punishment.

References:

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<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/research/analysis/reports/year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2024>
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16. Bedard H. NEW POLL: Overall Support for the Death Penalty Remains at Five-Decade Low as Opposition to the Death Penalty Grows Among Younger Generations. Death Penalty Information Center. Published November 18, 2024. <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/new-poll-overall-support-for-the-death-penalty-remains-at-five-decade-low-as-opposition-to-the-death-penalty-grows-among-younger-generations>