



Facts about the DEATH PENALTY

Unfair and biased.

A recent University of Denver study is the latest in a long line to conclude that the application of death sentences has far more to do with money, location, and race than the severity of the crime committed. A quick look at the three men on Colorado's death row confirms this: all three are African-American and from the same city, even the same high school. A system that chooses who lives and dies based on where they live and the color of their skin is not one that Colorado should support.

Further harms families.

Rather than providing murder victims' families with a sense of justice and closure, the death penalty drags them through years of appeals, forcing them to continually relive the nightmare. Life without parole is a swift and severe sentence that allows families to move on with their lives and begin healing.

An expensive failure.

The death penalty does not deter crime nor promote public safety. The vast majority of law enforcement professionals surveyed agree that capital punishment does not deter violent crime and the FBI has found the states with the death penalty have the highest murder rates. Moreover, it is a punishment that is far more expensive than life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Our limited resources are best used on policies we know are effective at decreasing violent crime.

Risks the innocent.

In the last thirteen years, 238 people have been found to be innocent of the crimes they were convicted of. Eighteen spent time on death row awaiting execution. Tim Masters and Robert Dewey have shown us that Colorado's justice system is not immune to such errors. Our next mistake could be a fatal one.

A society that respects life does not deliberately kill people.

An execution is a violent public spectacle of official homicide, and one that endorses killing to solve social problems – the worst possible example to set for the citizenry, and especially children. The benefits of capital punishment are illusory, but the bloodshed and the resulting destruction of community decency are real.