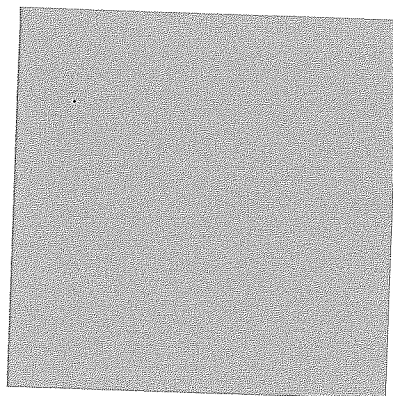
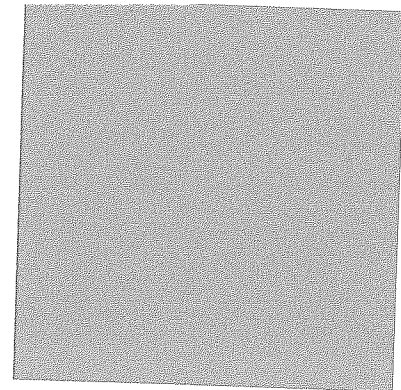


Is the Death Penalty a Viable Punishment in California?

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Ever since the dawn of populous civilizations, death has been the common punishment for hardcore, uncivilized criminals. However, as society advances both physically and mentally, death deems itself an unreasonable and unconstitutional punishment for even the most reckless convicts. Out of the fifty states that constitute the United States of America, only fifteen have abolished the death penalty, with New Jersey and New Mexico being the most recent. Currently, California is enduring a heated debate on whether it should become the sixteenth state to eliminate the death penalty and substitute the prison term with a life sentence without parole. California should discontinue the death penalty, because it is an absolutely unfair, unethical, and unconstitutional punishment for a human to undergo, and in addition, life without parole has more valuable benefits for the state and its citizens.

Capital punishment is, in no way, a logical punishment for any person to go through or witness, because it inflicts more harm than good on numerous amounts of people. All executions that take place in California must occur at the San Quentin State Prison, where lethal injections are considered to be the more humane method, compared to the electric chair. This lethal method was used for over 1,000 executions throughout the United States, because it is often referenced as a painless system, but it can inflict excruciating pain if the procedure is not carried out properly. After strapping the prisoner down onto a gurney, the first injection of sodium thiopental is supposed to render the victim unconscious, which is vital in order for the rest of the process to be relatively humane and painless. Next, the unconscious convict will then receive a dose of pancuronium bromide, which is expected to induce paralysis. The final, but lethal, injection of

potassium chloride will immediately stop the heart, but can cause severe pain if the patient is still conscious. Therefore, if the first injection of sodium thiopental is not given properly, or if the dosage is inadequate, the victim could be still awake and conscious. In addition, since the second injection causes paralysis, the executioners will not be able to see any sign of intense pain or distress coming from the paralyzed criminal as they inject the potassium chloride. Amazingly, the paralyzing agent used, is occasionally used on animals, and therefore, banned in some states for the specific reason that it can hide the pain, but it is still legal for use on humans. As a result, lethal injections may seem like a mild method for executing a human, but unfortunately, the expiring victim maybe suffering from unbearable agony, which therefore classifies the procedure as a cruel or unusual punishment, which violates the Constitution. Furthermore, the convict's family might have to witness the horrendous event of their loved one being executed, which can cause severe trauma. Lastly, the job of the executioners is to put the criminal to death, but for every case they go through and witness, another cloud of guilt will hang over them for the rest of their lives. Therefore, the court will not only be punishing the person who carried out the crime, but they will also be unknowingly punishing faultless executioners who are just trying to make a living. However, capital punishment is not only hurting innocent people, but it will also be the cause of its future demise, as it continually proves itself to be a cruel, unusual, and unnecessary punishment.

The death penalty is claimed to be received as a punishment for a criminal's malicious actions and for the protection of the general public, but it surely seems like it is an extraordinarily barbaric sentence. Killing the criminal for discipline reasons serves no purpose,

because he is not coming back to life. Therefore, we are essentially going back in time to the period of an “eye for an eye” justice system, because the death penalty was never a punishment, but more of an action of revenge. In addition, the death penalty is a far more expensive method than sentencing a criminal to life in prison without parole. In California, our current system costs about \$137 million dollars per year, but if our government switches to a system without a death penalty, it would only cost \$11.5 million. Furthermore, if the death penalty is supposed to deter people away from crime, it is surely a failure, because states with the death penalty have homicide rates as much as 101% higher than states who abolished the death penalty. In addition, since 1973 the United States released over 130 people from death row due to their innocence. Therefore, there is no way to estimate how many innocent people have been executed because they were wrongfully accused. No human has the right to force someone into capital punishment, so the best alternative is a life sentence without parole.

Sentencing a criminal to a life sentence without parole is a far more ethical, reasonable, and cheaper form of punishment. The convict will continually be punished for the rest of his life, which is what he deserves, but it will only punish him and not any innocent families or executioners. Furthermore, if the criminal is later found innocent, he can simply be let out of prison, but if the same criminal was sentenced to death, he obviously cannot be resurrected. Therefore, life without parole has almost no downsides, other than prisons becoming overcrowded, but that can be fixed by building prisons for “lifers” using the money saved by switching justice systems.

The death penalty is a cruel and unusual punishment, and with a sentencing of life without parole being more humane and beneficial, it clearly serves as an ideal substitute. Capital

punishment harms more than just the criminal; it harms their innocent families and the executioner. Putting someone to death is a harsh and unreasonable punishment, but a life sentence without parole is a far more appropriate response. California has to become the next state to abolish the death penalty, because it does not serve a practical or ethical purpose.

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