DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER

THE DEATH PENALTY IN 2016: YEAR END REPORT

Media Coverage Summary

DPIC's 2016 Year End Report was released on December 21, 2016, and received extensive favorable coverage in print and online media, television, and radio. Hundreds of outlets carried stories about the report. The coverage heavily emphasized the theme of historic lows in death sentences, executions, and public support for capital punishment. International media characterized this year's trends as evidence of major national change. In local and regional coverage, most areas noted declines, while outlets in California, Georgia, and Texas examined practices that made their states outliers.

Highlights of this year's coverage included print stories in *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, *USA Today*, and a detailed analysis in *The Washington Post*. *USA Today*, the nation's highest-circulation newspaper, used the report to frame Dylann Roof's death sentence as bucking national trends. *NBC News* and *Forbes* both published online pieces with an emphasis on data-heavy graphics. Television coverage included features on MSNBC's "Hardball with Chris Matthews" and PBS' "NewsHour." Data from TV Eyes monitoring service indicates that our total broadcast coverage received over 3 million impressions. On radio, Robert Dunham appeared on "POTUS," a popular politics program on SIRIUS XM and "Here and Now," an NPR program that is carried by over 450 affiliate stations.

Several editorials highlighted the report's themes in the week following publication. *The New York Times* published a forceful editorial (online 12/26, print 12/27) drawing on data from the report to make the case for abolition of the death penalty. It called capital punishment "morally abhorrent," and said this year's trends indicate the practice, "is sliding into the dustbin of American history — where it should have been long ago." *The Los Angeles Times'* Dec. 21 editorial lauded the national decline in death sentences while criticizing Los Angeles County's position as the leader in new death sentences. Like *The New York Times*, it called on the U.S. Supreme Court to use the decline as a reason to end the death penalty.

Robert Dunham's quote from the press release, characterizing the United States as, "in the midst of a major climate change concerning capital punishment" was widely repeated. Outlets consistently described this year's numbers as evidence of significant, long-term change, rather than mere curiosities. We hope that this framing will be beneficial in coming years, as we may see temporary increases in the number of executions or even death sentences.

A selection of coverage follows:

TOP TIER PRINT & ONLINE MEDIA

Associated Press	"Death sentences decline sharply as public attitudes shift," Dec. 21
BBC	"US capital punishment fall to 40-year low in 2016," Dec. 21
Chicago Tribune	"Death penalty's decline continues," Dec. 28
Christian Science Monitor	"Capital punishment falls to decades-long lows as attitudes shift," Dec. 21
CNN	"US executions fall to record lows in 2016," Dec. 22
Forbes	"U.S. Executions Fell To A 25-Year Low In 2016," Jan. 3
The Guardian	"Death penalty slowly disappearing from the US, end-of-year report suggests," Dec. 21
Los Angeles Times	"Death penalty in steep decline, but not in Los Angeles County," Dec. 21
NBC News	"Death Penalty Drops to 40-Year Low, Report Finds," Dec. 21
New York Times	"Executions Hit 25-Year Low as Support Falls, Report Says," Dec. 22
NPR	"Death Sentences And Executions Are Down, But Voters Still Support Death Penalty Laws," Dec. 21
Reuters	"U.S. executions hit 25-year low as capital punishment wanes-study," Dec. 21
San Francisco Chronicle	"Steep decline reported in executions, death sentences," Dec. 21
Time	"Death Penalty Slowly Fading Away Across the U.S.," Dec. 21
UPI	"Death sentences, executions in U.S. lowest in 25 years," Dec. 21
USA Today	"Charleston shooter death sentence goes against national trend," Jan. 10 (See also: "Does the death penalty serve a purpose? Supreme Court hasn't decided either," Dec. 12, relying on DPIC data)
Wall Street Journal	"Executions in U.S. in 2016 hit 25-year low," Dec. 21
Washington Post	"Executions and death sentences plummeted this year as capital punishment declined nationwide," Dec. 24 (See also: "Executions in the United States just fell to a 25-year low," Dec. 15, relying on DPIC data)
Washington Times	"Death penalty falls to new low as voters seek resurgence," Dec. 22

EDITORIALS, OP-EDS, AND COMMENTARY

Christian Science Monitor	**"The disappearing death penalty," Dec. 28**
Los Angeles Times	**"Finally, fewer death sentences," Dec. 21**
New York Times	**"The Continuing Collapse of the Death Penalty," Dec. 26**
Washington Post	**"Even Dylann Roof should not receive a death sentence," Jan. 4**
Argus-Press (MI)	"Courts must recognize society's distaste for death penalty," Dec. 28
The Daily Home (AL)	"Take a guess about how many U.S. death sentences were issued in 2016?" Dec. 21
Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA)	"Executions, fading," Dec. 28
San Mateo Daily Journal (CA)	"OP-ED: Death sentences in the U.S.," Dec. 28

TELEVISION

MSNBC Hardball with Chris Matthews (12/21)	**PBS NewsHour (12/21)**
KXXV-WAC (ABC) Waco, TX	WISH (CW) Indianapolis, IN
CW18 Orlando, FL	WGHP (FOX) Greensboro, NC
KBAK (CBS) Bakersfield, CA	KBFX (FOX) Bakersfield, CA
KCBD (NBC) Lubbock, TX	KLS (NBC) Salt Lake City, UT
KTNV (ABC) Las Vegas, NV	WISN (ABC) Milwaukee, WI
WCCT (CW) Hartford, CT	WTIC (FOX) Hartford, CT
Central Florida News 13	KXAN (NBC) Austin, TX
WFTX (FOX) Fort Myers, FL	WHIO (CBS) Dayton, OH
WTVG (ABC) Toledo, OH	KMBC (ABC) Kansas City, MO
KWCH (CBS) Wichita, KS	KNSD (NBC) San Diego, CA
KFVS (CBS) Paducah, KY	KGTV (ABC) San Diego, CA
WXYZ (ABC) Detroit, MI	WINK (CBS) Fort Myers, FL
WSB (ABC) Atlanta, GA	WMAZ (CBS) Macon, GA
WSOC (ABC) Charlotte, NC	WTVY (CBS) Dothan, AL

KDFW (FOX) Dallas, TX	KSTP (ABC) Minneapolis, MN
KTVK Phoenix, AZ	WSET (ABC) Roanoke, VA

RADIO

NPR "Here and Now," 12/21, (TV Eyes indicates broadcast on at least 45 affiliates)	Sirius XM "POTUS" 12/21	CBS Radio, carried on major affiliates in CA and OH
KFYI-AM Phoenix, AZ	KLBJ-AM Austin, TX	KOGO-AM San Diego, CA
News Radio 1330 Green Bay, WI	News Talk 570 Syracuse, NY	WFLA-AM Tampa Bay, FL
WHAMA-AM Rochester, NY	WHIO-AM Dayton, OH	WIBC-FM Indianapolis, IN
WIBX-AM Utica, NY	WOKV-AM Jacksonville, FL	WTAG-AM Springfield, MA
WTAM-AM Cleveland, OH	WTAQ-AM Green Bay, WI	WTVN-AM Columbus, OH
KTRH Houston, TX	BBC Radio (UK)	KUT 90.5 Austin, TX
WESA-FM Pittsburgh, PA	WHYY Philadelphia, PA	WBFO-FM Buffalo, NY
WDDE-FM Philadelphia, PA	WUNC-FM Raleigh, NC	KLIF-AM Dallas, TX
KOH-AM Reno, NV	All News 106.7 Atlanta, GA	KABC-AM Los Angeles, CA
KUIK Portland, OR	KYW-AM Philadelphia, PA	WBAL-AM Baltimore, MD
WBZ-AM Boston, MA	WINS-AM New York, NY	WJR-AM Detroit, MI
KMOX-AM St. Louis, MO	KNX-AM Los Angeles, CA	KXNT Las Vegas, NV
WBBM-AM Chicago, IL	WDBO-FM Orlando, FL	KOPB-FM Portland, OR
YNN Albany, NY	WSB-AM Atlanta, GA	WAMU-FM Washington, DC
WOAI-AM San Antonio, TX	KGMI Seattle, WA	Delaware 105.9
WEAA-FM Baltimore, MD	WSB-AM Atlanta, GA	KGO-AM San Francisco, CA

SPECIALTY AND LOCAL COVERAGE

Atlanta Journal-Constitution	"Death sentences now a rarity in Georgia," Jan. 2
Birmingham News (AL)	"New Alabama death sentences at 40-year low," Dec. 23
Daily Press (VA)	"Death penalty's decline continues," Dec. 28
Dallas Morning News	"More legal avenues slow execution pace," Dec. 27

Dayton Daily News (OH)	"Executions, death sentences hit new national lows this year," Dec. 22
The Enquirer-Journal (NC)	"N.C. has one of nation 's largest death rows," Dec. 25
Houston Chronicle (TX)	"Death sentences, executions drop to modern lows; Practice slackens, but public willing to retain option," Dec. 25
Miami Herald (FL)	"Fewer executions, death sentences in Florida stem from limbo of state law, study says," Dec. 21
Reading Eagle (PA)	"Support for death penalty continues to wane," Dec. 21
Reason Magazine	"Death Penalty Sentences in America Continue Decline," Dec. 21
Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA)	"Executions in U.S. reach a 25-year low," Dec. 21
Sacramento Bee	"The issue on which California is less progressive than the nation," Dec. 30
Tampa Bay Times (FL)	"Study: Death penalty on decline," Dec. 21
Tulsa World (OK)	"Reflecting national trend, death sentences and executions decline in 2016," Dec. 21
Winston-Salem Journal (NC)	"Death penalty seeing decline," Dec. 27

INTERNATIONAL

AFP	"Death penalty may be on the way out in US: report," Dec. 21
Al Jazeera English	"Study: Rates of US execution sharply decline in 2016," Dec. 21
China News Network	"美国死刑判决和处决囚犯数量降至历史新低" ("The number of death sentences and executions in the United States dropped to a record low"), Dec. 23
The Independent (UK)	"Execution rates decline as public attitudes shift," Dec. 21
International Business Times	"Capital Punishment In US: Executions Hit 25-Year Low In 2016, Study Shows," Dec. 21
Japan Times	"2016 has fewest U.S. death sentences since 1970s," Dec. 22
Legal Monitor Worldwide	"Death penalty losing traction in US: report," Dec. 23
Pakistan Today	"US executions hit 25-year low as capital punishment wanes: study," Dec. 21
Toronto Sun	"U.S. death sentences plummet," Dec. 22

Voice of Russia	"Number of US Death Sentences Expected to Drop to Historic Low of 30 in 2016," Dec. 21