



# The Death Penalty in 2024

Death Sentences and Executions Remain Near  
Historic Lows Amid Growing Concerns about  
Fairness and Innocence

**President Biden and North Carolina Governor  
Consider Commutations of Death Rows to  
Remedy Systemic Problems**

**Four States Responsible for 76% of Executions**

## Four States Responsible for 76% of Executions

- The number of new death sentences in 2024 increased from 2023, with 26. The number of people on death row across the United States has continued to decline from a peak population in the year 2000.
- Public support for the death penalty remains at a five-decade low (53%) and Gallup's recent polling reveals that more than half of young U.S. adults ages 18 through 43 now oppose the death penalty. Fewer people found the death penalty morally acceptable this year (55%) than last year (60%).
- Significant media attention, public protest, and support from unlikely allies in the cases of Marcellus "Khaliifah" Williams, Robert Roberson, and Richard Glossip elevated the issue of innocence in 2024, as the United States marked the milestone of 200 death row exonerations.
- No individual death-sentenced person received clemency in 2024, the first year since 2016 without any clemency grants. At least two mass clemency campaigns are pending decisions.
- Death penalty-related legislation was enacted in at least six states to limit use of the death penalty, alter execution methods or protocols, modify procedures, and increase secrecy. Abolition efforts continue in more than a dozen states, and efforts to reintroduce the death penalty in eight states failed. Only one effort to expand the death penalty to non-homicide crimes was successful.
- The 1600th execution in the modern death penalty era occurred in September 2024.
- The number of people executed in 2024 remained nearly the same as 2023, with 25 executions occurring in nine states. This was the tenth consecutive year with fewer than 30 executions. Utah, South Carolina, and Indiana conducted their first executions after more than a decade hiatus. Alabama became the first state to use nitrogen gas to execute prisoners.
- The United States Supreme Court has largely abandoned the critical role it has historically played in regulating and limiting use of the death penalty.
- The death penalty has been abolished in practice or in law in a majority of countries around the world (144), and 2024 saw legal abolition efforts progress in four more countries. Despite this, global executions increased in 2024 for the third straight year, led by Iran.

# Credits

The Death Penalty Information Center (DPI) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to serve the media, policymakers, and the general public with data and analysis on issues concerning capital punishment and the people it affects. DPI does not take a position on the death penalty itself but is critical of problems in its application.

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## Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Public Opinon	10
Innocence	14
Legislation	22
New Death Sentences	29
Supreme Court	33
Executions	45
International	60
Quotes	67
Methodology	70