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Majority of Capital Juries in 2025 Rejected Death Sentences

Florida-Driven Surge in Executions Drives Uptick in Executions Despite Record-Low Public Approval

(Washington, D.C.) — New death sentences remained near historic lows (23) while the total number of executions (47) is the highest in fifteen years due to a surge in Florida. This disparity demonstrates the actions of elected officials to schedule executions are inconsistent with polling and other data indicating the growing unpopularity of the death penalty.

Capital juries showed increasing reluctance to impose new death sentences in 2025 amid faltering public support and decreased confidence in the use of capital punishment. For the first time, DPI tracked cases in which more than 50 capital juries weighed decisions between life and death sentences and found that 56% recommended a life sentence over a death sentence. Only fourteen capital juries nationwide were able to unanimously agree to impose death sentences in 2025.

"These striking numbers tell us that new death sentences are becoming vanishingly rare, and that even jurors who are willing to use the death penalty are finding reasons not to do so," said Robin Maher, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center (DPI).

Public support for the death penalty is the lowest in fifty years (52%), and polling continues to point to significant and growing generational differences. A majority of people younger than age 55 now disapprove of the death penalty.

Read "The Death Penalty in 2025: Year End Report" here:
https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/research/analysis/reports/year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2025

Use of the death penalty remains extremely isolated and concentrated. Only four states — Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, and Texas — were responsible for nearly three-quarters (72%) of executions. Just three states — Alabama, California, and Florida — imposed 14 new death sentences, or 64% of new death sentences this year. From 2024 to 2025, the number of executions in Florida increased from one to 19. The significant increase in

executions in Florida shattered the state's previous record of eight executions in a single year. The state is responsible for more than a third of this year's executions nationwide.

"The increase in this year's execution numbers was caused by the outlier state of Florida, where the governor set a record number of executions," said Ms. Maher. "The data show that the decisions of Gov. DeSantis and other elected officials are increasingly at odds with the decisions of American juries and the opinions of the American public."

One sentence in Florida was imposed by a judge after the defendant waived a jury trial, and another seven new death sentences were the result of divided juries, permitted only in Alabama (four) and Florida (three).

Just eleven states (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Tennessee) are conducted executions this year.

Methods of execution were the subject of legislation, litigation, and controversy in a dozen states. Louisiana adopted nitrogen gas as a method of execution and ended a 15 year pause with the execution of Jessie Hoffman in March. Witnesses reported that Mr. Hoffman "shook" and "jerked" during his execution. South Carolina continued to use the firing squad despite an autopsy report showing that shooters missed the heart of prisoner Mikal Mahdi in April. In Alabama, Anthony Boyd's troubling nitrogen gas execution lasted nearly 40 minutes and prompted a passionate dissent from three of the Supreme Court's justices.

Innocence cases once again made headlines, with conservative lawmakers and elected officials publicly supporting relief for death-sentenced prisoners like Richard Glossip in Oklahoma and Robert Roberson in Texas.

The U.S. Supreme Court denied every request to stay an execution in 2025, a continued retreat from the critical role it has historically played in regulating and limiting the use of the death penalty.

The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, which is unaffiliated with DPI, has issued its own report about Texas specific death penalty issues at https://tcadp.org/reports/

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individuals and charitable foundations. DPI does not take a position on the death penalty itself but is critical of problems in its application.

Founded in 1990, DPI promotes insightful discourse on the death penalty by curating and presenting expansive, authoritative data from credible sources and offering clear, trustworthy, and timely information and research about the history and current application of the death penalty. DPI produces groundbreaking reports on issues such as arbitrariness, costs, innocence, and racial disparities. Each year, DPI also releases an annual year-end report highlighting significant developments and trends. A wide variety of free online resources are available on DPI's award-winning website, including searchable databases; data visualizations; educational curricula; and podcast series, *12:01 The Death Penalty in Context*, which explores diverse viewpoints and experiences related to capital punishment.