

PRESS RELEASE

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DEATH PENALTY DECLINES BY EVERY MEASURE IN OHIO, ACROSS U.S.

Columbus - By every measure – public opinion, death sentences, and executions – the death penalty declined in 2015, according to a [report](#) released today by the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC). Ohio imposed only one new death sentence this year, down from three in 2014 and an average of 4.4 new death sentences annually over the past five years. Nationwide, there were 49 new death sentences in 2015, a 33% decline over last year's total.

Only six states carried out executions this year, and the 28 total executions in the U.S. marked the lowest number since 1991. Ohio was among the 44 states that did not conduct any executions, reflecting the increasing geographic isolation of the death penalty.

Six people were exonerated from death rows across the country, highlighting the risk of wrongful convictions in capital cases. They spent a total of over a century on death row, and an average of 19 years in prison for crimes they did not commit. Ohio has had nine exonerations since 1973, most recently Kwame Ajamu and his co-defendants, Ricky Jackson and Wiley Bridgeman, who were all exonerated in Cuyahoga County late in 2014. Jackson, who spent more than 39 years incarcerated for a crime he had nothing to do with, holds the distinction of being the longest-serving exoneree in the nation.

"Once again, Ohio is central to a national trend," said Kevin Werner, executive director of Ohioans to Stop Executions. "We know that more Ohioans prefer life without parole instead of the death penalty when pollsters give that option. With no executions expected for at least another year and only one new death sentence in 2015, perhaps it's time for the legislature to end executions once and for all in our state, rather than wasting time and money trying fix it."

Kevin Werner may be reached for additional comments on Ohio death penalty trends at [614-981-3148](tel:614-981-3148).

To speak with Robert Dunham, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center about national death penalty trends, please contact Anne Holsinger at [202-289-4022](tel:202-289-4022) or aholsinger@deathpenaltyinfo.org

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