

### WHY R.E.P.E.A.L.?

### RELIGION & MORALITY

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#### The Catholic Church Leads

The Catholic Church has long led the efforts to end the death penalty. The Church maintains the dignity of all humans made in God's image and the importance of protecting life from "womb to tomb". The Gospel of Life proclaims:

*"The dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform."*

Pope Francis has repeatedly called upon people of faith to work for an end to the death penalty. The Holy Father has said:

*"Nowadays the death penalty is inadmissible, no matter how serious the crime committed. It is an offence against the inviolability of life and the dignity of the human person, which contradicts God's plan for man and society, and his merciful justice, and impedes the penalty from fulfilling any just objective. It does not render justice to the victims, but rather fosters vengeance"*

#### The Death Penalty Is Not Pro-Life

Many believe a culture of life is best displayed when life is protected from conception to natural death. The presence of the death penalty undermines these values. Abby Johnson, former Planned Parenthood employee and Pro-Life Advocate has said:

*"For all who are pro-life we are called to oppose all threats to life from conception to natural death – including the death penalty"*

Those who wish to protect innocent life have reason for concern with the death penalty, to date 161 people have been removed from death rows due to evidence of their innocence. With the death penalty, there is no way to guarantee an innocent life won't be taken.

#### Many Christians Oppose the Death Penalty

The majority of Christian denominations have joined Catholics in working against the death penalty, these groups include: The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The United Methodist Church, and the United Church of Christ. Recently the National Association of Evangelicals overturned their endorsement of capital punishment.

### People Of Faith Know Only God Is Perfect – With The Death Penalty Human Mistakes Are Inevitable

Given that Louisiana has the highest exoneration rate per capita, there is an increased risk that if Louisiana continues to kill people, we may kill an innocent person.

To date 11 people have been released from LA's death rows due to evidence of their innocence. One of these individuals was John Thompson. Mr. Thompson, an innocent man, was scheduled to be put to death in 1999. Exculpatory evidence, showing his innocence, was discovered just 30 days before his scheduled execution. What if that evidence had been found 30 days later?

As long as we have a death penalty we risk executing an innocent person.

### Louisiana, the U.S., and the World Are Moving Away From The Death Penalty

- In a 2016 poll, over 57% of Louisiana voters preferred life with parole after 35 years or life without parole over the death penalty.
- Nineteen U.S. states and Washington, D.C. have eliminated the death penalty - six of these states have ended this practice since 2007. 11 additional states have had no executions in the last decade.
- 2016 and 2017 saw historically low rates of both executions and juries returning death sentences.
- The United States is the only Western Democracy that still uses the death penalty. The vast majority of nations no longer use death as punishment. The U.S. finds itself in the company of China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia when it comes to the death penalty.

### Support For The Death Penalty Is At Record Lows

A December 2017 Gallup poll showed support for capital punishment is the lowest it has been since 1972 – a 45-year low. While the firm found that 55% of Americans still favor the death penalty, it's down from a high of 80% in 1994. They also discovered that Republican support for capital punishment dropped 10 points over the past year, bringing it to the lowest it has been since before 1988.

**For more information visit: [www.larepeal.org](http://www.larepeal.org)**