

**These resources are offered in order for you to be prepared to debate concurrence with the position: “The League of Women Voters of the United States Supports the Abolition of the Death Penalty.”**

**Books:**

Turow, Scott. The Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer’s Reflection on the Death Penalty. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 2003.

This small, well-written volume is based on an earlier story in The New Yorker. Turow explains his own evolution of thought on the death penalty. It results from his own personal experience as a criminal lawyer in capital cases, as well as his membership on the Illinois Commission on Capital Punishment. His service furthered his own analysis of the reasons for and against the death penalty, including the role of the victim’s survivors. The Commission’s report influenced Governor Ryan’s decision to commute the sentences of 167 inmates on death row on his last day in office.

Bedau, Hugo Adam. Death is Different: Studies in the Morality, Law and Politics of Capital Punishment. (1987) Co-author of In Spite of Innocence: Erroneous Convictions in Capital Cases. (1992, rev.ed. 1994) ~~Editor of The Death Penalty in America (1997). Co-editor of Capital Punishment in the United States. (1976).~~ A noted scholar and researcher on the death penalty issue.

Turow, Scott. “Repeal or Repair”. Wall St. Journal. April 24, 2002.

**Audio-visuals:**

Sister Helen Prejean. 2000. “Dead Man Walking: The Journey”. Sister Helen recounts the story she is now confident to share with the American people...that the death penalty should be rejected. A moratorium is the graceful way to stop it now...until abolition is achieved.

“Too Flawed to Fix - The Illinois Death Penalty Experience”. Peace Productions. Chicago, IL. 2002.

This video explores and exposes the irreparable flaws in the criminal justice system that have wrongfully convicted 13 people in Illinois. The documentary puts before the nation the stories of the injustices at the heart of capital punishment. Available in two lengths: 20 min. or 60 min.

**Web Sites:**

1. <http://www.aclu.org/DeathPenalty/DeathPenaltyMain.cfm>

The ACLU web site on the death penalty. The American Civil Liberties Union believes the death penalty inherently violates the constitutional ban against cruel and unusual punishment and the guarantees of due process of law and of equal protection under the law.

Publications on this site include “DNA Testing and the Death Penalty,” “A Question of Innocence,” “Unequal Justice: Inadequate Representation,” “Geography Determines Death Sentences,” “Race and the Death Penalty.”

**[http://www.archive.aclu.org/library/case\\_against\\_death.html](http://www.archive.aclu.org/library/case_against_death.html)**

**The case against the death penalty by Hugo Bedau**, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University who has written extensively on the death penalty and presents here a well organized summary of leading arguments.

2. **<http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/>**

The Amnesty International, USA web site on the death penalty.

Presented are fact sheets on the death penalty as it relates to:

Juveniles, Deterrence, Mental Retardation, Mental Illness, Federal Death Penalty, Foreign Nationals, International Human Rights Standards, Racial Prejudices, Arbitrary and Unfair Proceedings, Innocence, Cost.

**[http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/dp\\_qa.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/dp_qa.html)**

This Q and A page addresses questions including:

- Why does Amnesty International oppose the death penalty?
- [In opposing the death penalty, isn't Amnesty International showing disrespect for victims of violent crime and their relatives?](#)
- [What does international law say about the use of the death penalty?](#)
- [But surely there are times when the state has no choice but to take someone's life?](#)
- [What do you say to the argument that the death penalty is an important tool for a state to fight crime?](#)
- [Isn't it necessary to execute certain prisoners in order to prevent them from repeating their crimes?](#)
- [Surely a person who commits an horrendous crime or who kills another individual deserves to die?](#)
- Isn't the death penalty needed to stop acts of terrorism and political violence?

3. **<Http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>**

**The web site of the Death Penalty Information Center, this site offers a detailed examination of the federal death penalty. This very comprehensive site explores many other issues including: clemency, costs, deterrence, mental illness, mental retardation, race, victims. Statistics and studies are cited for each issue. There is state-by-state information, including: number of executions, numbers of people on death row, specific details on each state's death penalty statute.**

4. <http://justice.policy.net/cjedfund/jpreport/>

This is the site of the study conducted by Professor James S. Liebman of the Columbia University School of Law: **A Broken System: Error Rates in Capital Cases, 1973-1995.**

From the Executive Summary: “Nationally, during the 23-year study period, **the overall rate of prejudicial error in the American capital punishment system was 68%.** In other words, courts found **serious, reversible error in nearly 7 of every 10 of the thousands of capital sentences that were fully reviewed during the period.**”

5. <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/wrongfulconvictions/>

This is the website of Northwestern University's Center on Wrongful Convictions. The Legal Director is Larry Marshall, Professor of Law at Northwestern University. Through the Center and Northwestern's Bluhm Legal Clinic, he has represented many wrongfully convicted defendants, including former Illinois death row prisoners Rolando Cruz, Gary Gauger, Anthony Porter, Ronald Jones, and Darby Tillis.

The stories of the 17 men exonerated from Illinois' death row are told here. The stories give insight into the flaws of the death penalty system. The site lists the names of 38 individuals who were executed despite compelling evidence of innocence or serious doubt about guilt. At this writing, two of the 38 cases are presented in detail.

6. [www.moratoriumcampaign.org](http://www.moratoriumcampaign.org)

The Moratorium Campaign is an organization founded by Sr. Helen Prejean, author of **Dead Man Walking**. The site is a compilation of articles including “An interview with Sister Helen Prejean on pbs.org” and “Serious Concerns Emerge Over Federal Death Penalty.”

7. [www.mvfr.org](http://www.mvfr.org)

This site counters the notion that all family members of murder victims desire the death penalty. This site presents a position, unique to families, for opposing the death penalty.

**8. [www.ncadp.org](http://www.ncadp.org)**

The website of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Current death row populations are listed by state and by race.

Other statistics are provided such as a comparison of the race of defendants executed with the race of the victims.

Fact Sheets include:

“The US Leads the World in Killing Kids”

“Executing Minorities: An American Tradition”

“Millions to kill; Pennies to Heal”

“Guilty Until Proven Innocent”

“Deterrence: Fact or Fiction?”

“Mental Competency and the Death Penalty”

**9. [www.pewforum.org/death](http://www.pewforum.org/death)**

This site provides resources from an excellent forum, “A Call for Reckoning-Religion and the Death Penalty”, at the University of Chicago in January 2002. Scholars, Civic Leaders and Religious Academic speakers addressed the role religion plays in public policy concerning the death penalty. Transcripts and audio broadcasts are available online. Panelists included Supreme Court Justice, Antonio Scalia, and former IL Senator Paul Simon.

**10. <http://www.pfadp.org/index.shtml>**

This site presents statements of faith communities regarding the death penalty.

**11. [www.quixote.org](http://www.quixote.org)**

This is a faith-based social justice center. Sign up for the email, Equal Justice USA to receive action alerts to end the death penalty.

Also available: “Reasonable Doubts: Is the U.S. Executing Innocent People?” Grassroots Investigation Project, October 2000.

**12. Pro death penalty sites**

**[www.dpinfo.com/dpnews.htm](http://www.dpinfo.com/dpnews.htm)**

This site purports to contain many of the latest pro-death penalty articles.

**[www.prodeathpenalty.com](http://www.prodeathpenalty.com)**

This site has been developed by **Justice for All**. Included is a paper supporting the death penalty entitled, ““Death Penalty and Sentencing Information” by Dudley Sharp, Death Penalty Resources Director, **Justice For All**.

