

Persuasive Speech Outline

Introduction

Why does the United States continue to violate human rights with the implementation of the death penalty? 102 countries have abolished this inhumane practice already, so what's the hold up? In *Catching Fire*, we see examples of Thread and other Head Peacekeepers issuing the death penalty as punishment for crimes committed within the districts. We feel it is wrong then, why don't we feel the same when it happens in our own country? Therefore, the death penalty should be abolished in the United States because of mistakes in the judicial system that can lead to the death of the innocent, the randomness of its sentencing, and its failure to deter people from committing murderous crimes.

Reasoning: Death of the Innocent

Evidence:

- Lots of decisions are made before the sentence → lots of room for error
- Immense power in judge → bias or discrimination
- Source: BBC, published in 2014, *Ethics of Capital Punishment*
 - 130 people sentenced to death have been found innocent since 1973

Summary: Because witnesses, jurors, and judges are human and have their own natural bias, mistakes can be made, sentencing innocent people to death.

Reasoning: Randomness of Sentencing

Evidence:

- Every murderer is not given death penalty
 - There is no quota of deaths or guidelines to justify death penalty
- No consistency
 - Eliminates idea that the death penalty is retributive in any way

Summary: The sentencing of the death penalty is given out too randomly to be cited as a retributive punishment meant to deter criminals from breaking the law.

Reasoning: Failure to Deter

Evidence:

- Doesn't deter people any more than the likelihood of getting caught and punished
- Quote from philosopher Cesare Beccaria's *An Essay On Crimes and Punishments* from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
 - "There is no one who, on reflection, would choose the total and permanent loss of his own liberty, no matter how advantageous a crime might be. Therefore, the intensity of a sentence of servitude for life, substituted for the death penalty, has everything needed to deter the most determined spirit... With capital punishment, one crime is required for each example offered to the nation; with the penalty of a lifetime at hard labor, a single crime affords a host of lasting examples"

- UN study conducted in 1988 and updated in 1996 stating that “research failed to produce scientific evidence proving executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment”

Conclusion

Despite the possibility of punishing the innocent, the inefficient randomness in sentencing, and the failure to deter criminals from crime, the United States continues to implement the death penalty as a punishment. 102 countries have already abolished it, and we should clearly be next.

Works Cited

“Ethics - Capital Punishment: Arguments against Capital Punishment.” BBC, BBC,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/capitalpunishment/against_1.shtml.

This source focuses mostly on the ethical arguments against capital punishment, using various statistics from the Death Penalty Information Center.

Hoag, Robert. “Capital Punishment.” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
<https://www.iep.utm.edu/cap-puni/#SH5a>.

This source describes basic context of what capital punishment is and its history in the United States, along with the arguments for and against it both ethically and politically.