

Ohioans to Stop Executions

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://otse.org/long-decline-executions-takes-detour/>

Policy Issue Resources

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For years, the number of prisoners put to death in the United States has been in decline. That is still true, but with a wrinkle: this year will be the first since 2009 in which there were more executions than the year before. The grim milestone will likely be crossed on Wednesday night, when Anthony Shore is scheduled to be executed in Texas. Unless the courts intervene, it will be the 21st execution of the year, one more than last year. Eight others are scheduled through the end of the year.

Why does this matter? The upswing does not suggest that executions are likely to become more common, but it does grow out of recent courtroom battles. Chief among them is a big victory that the Supreme Court gave to state officials back in 2015. Officials had been looking for new drugs to use in lethal injections, and fighting to keep the sources secret from defense lawyers, as pharmaceutical companies kept pushing to keep their products out of death chambers. The courts decision in the case of *Glossip v. Gross* set a high bar for arguments that new drug combinations would violate the Constitutions ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

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