

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/statewide-poll-death-penalty-reveals-ohio-voters-are-ready-end-capital-punishment>**

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COLUMBUS Today the ACLU of Ohio and Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE) released a statewide public opinion poll of voters views on capital punishment, and the results show that a strong majority of Ohioans support repealing the death penalty. **Key findings include:**

The momentum to repeal the death penalty is at an all-time high. Just last month, Ohio lawmakers passed a bill that exempts individuals with a serious mental illness from receiving a death sentence. This development has sparked more conversations about how Ohio can build a more equitable criminal legal system. Furthermore, we know the death penalty is not an effective response to violence, and that it won't prevent future violence or heal past violence, noted **Hannah Kubbins, Executive Director for OTSE**.

In early December, just weeks after the poll was conducted, Governor DeWine announced an extended moratorium on capital punishment in Ohio, citing a lack of drugs available to carry out lethal injection. As of January 2021, 22 states plus Washington D.C. have abolished the death penalty.

This poll in Ohio confirms what we've been hearing across the state which is that voters oppose the death penalty. Whether its due to racial disparity, fiscal or innocence concerns, people all across the state and across the aisle believe that its time for Ohio to cut ties with the death penalty. Ohio won't be the first state to pass a full repeal, and we shouldn't be the last, said **Jocelyn Rosnick, Policy Director for the ACLU of Ohio**.

Analyses estimate that death penalty trials cost taxpayers as much as \$16 million dollars per case. As of November 2020, there are 139 people on Ohio's death row. Ohioans are acutely aware - especially during the COVID-19 pandemic - that there are many urgent issues requiring state funding, and executing hundreds of people at an astronomical cost is not one of them, added **Kubbins**.

The ACLU of Ohio and OTSE are not only outraged by the financial burden of the death penalty, but also the racial justice component. People of color make up 15% of Ohio's population and 56% of Ohio's death row. 75% of Ohio executions involve a white victim. Ohio's criminal legal system is plagued with racial disparities and the death penalty is no exception. This poll shows there is an appetite among voters to abandon the defective and unjust use of capital punishment in favor of life sentences where there is no risk of executing innocent people, concluded **Rosnick**.

Public opinion is changing with regard to foundational issues like the death penalty and we should not be surprised that this is happening in Ohio as well, noted **Brian Tringali, Partner at The Tarrance Group**.

The study, conducted by The Tarrance Group between September 29 and October 1, 2020, included online interviews to 600 registered voters in Ohio. The percentages reflect the view of Ohio voters of all major demographic groups, political affiliations, and geographical regions throughout Ohio.

Read the one-pager below.

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