

Ohioans to Stop Executions

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://otse.org/racial-disparity>

Campaign and Advocacy

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In 2001 the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit noted the racial imbalance on Ohios death row as glaringly extreme and to say the least, extremely troubling. However, they were unable to take action due to prior rulings by the United States Supreme Court that restricted court considerations of racially discriminatory patterns in death sentencing.

The Facts

Race impacts death sentencing at every stage of the death penalty process, often in ways that are hidden or unintentional. Cross-racial eyewitness identification, for example, is much less reliable than eyewitness identification from within the same race or ethnicity. White jurors are less likely to be receptive to mitigating evidence when the defendant is black, and more likely to find future dangerousness

The Joint Task Force to Review the Administration of Ohios Death Penalty made several recommendations attempting to address the clear racial bias, including the adoption of a Racial Justice Act. The act allows defendants facing the death penalty to present evidence of racial bias, including statistics, in court.

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