Death Peanalties Essay, Research Paper

The Death Penalty

I feel that this type of punishment is cruel and unusual. in violation of the Eighth

Amendment. I also say with the long wait on death row and the inefficiency of the

system, criminals are not deterred by this treatment. In addition, they ask, where is the

line drawn for crimes punishable by death? Out of 3,860 inmates executed from 1930 to

1980, 3380 were executed for murders; however, about 500 more were put to death for

other crimes. There is also the possibility that a criminal might be put to death for a crime

that another criminal in different state might have gotten a different punishment for. And

more minorities and ethnic Americans are executed, for the same crimes, than white

Americans. If people want to punish some one , I think killing really isn?t going to do

anything. When a person steps foot in the world of crime, they give up life. So how is

stopping life and giving up life really different. Death will approach them anyway, the

only different thing is who hand them it . I don?t think Human have any right to take

someone?s life, even our own. If people want to punish these criminals, punish them in a

way that they feel pain ,and agony, so that they ask for you to kill them. For the people

who have no conscience, we need to create one for them, so they can at least know and

feel the guilt of what they?ve done.

As of September 24, the United States set a new record by executing seventy-six persons in 1999,

more than in any year since the death penalty’s reinstatement in 1976. Nearly half of the 1999 executions

through September were carried out in Texas and Virginia. Among those executed in 1999 were foreign

nationals, a juvenile offender, and individuals who may have been mentally ill or retarded. Approximately

3,500 people were on death row.

Doubts about the death penalty were particularly acute in Illinois: three of the six persons

exonerated on grounds of innocence and released from death row during 1999 had been tried and

imprisoned there. Illinois’ dramatic cases in 1999-one of the death row inmates had come within two days of

execution five months before his exoneration-sparked a number of investigations into the state’s use of the

death penalty. Governor George Ryan also signed legislation devoting public funds for prosecution and

defense in capital trials, including monies for attorneys, investigators, and forensic specialists.

The US continued to be one of only six countries to execute persons who were younger than

eighteen when the crimes for which they were sentenced were committed. The imposition of the death

penalty on persons who were under eighteen years of age at the time of their offense violated the provisions

of international and regional human rights treaties to which the United States is party. Despite nearly

unanimous international condemnation of the use of the death penalty for juvenile offenders, six countries in

the world-Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Yemen-were known to have

executed juvenile offenders in the 1990s. The United States led the list with ten such executions between

1990 and 1999. In 1999, the United States carried out the execution of one juvenile offender, Sean Sellers,

marking the first time in forty years that the United States has executed someone for crimes committed as a

sixteen-year-old. Seventy juvenile offenders were on death row in the United States as of July 1, 1999.

In positive developments, the highest court of the US state of Florida ruled that the imposition of

the death penalty on sixteen-year-old offenders was cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the state

constitution; and effective October 1, 1999, the state of Montana abolished the death penalty for those

under eighteen at the time of their crimes. As a result, of the forty states that retained the death penalty after

October 1999, six allowed offenders sixteen years of age or older to be put to death. Nineteen states limited

the death penalty to those seventeen or older at the time of their crimes, and fifteen states restricted capital

punishment to adult offenders.

State authorities and US courts continued to disregard violations of the rights of defendants who

were not US citizens. Under the Vienna Convention, these defendants were supposed to be advised, upon

arrest, of their right to contact their embassies for assistance. In 1999, five foreign nationals were executed

despite reports that their right to consular notification had been breached: Jaturun Siripongs of Thailand;

Karl and Walter LaGrand, brothers from Germany; Alvaro Calambro of the Philippines; and Stanley

Faulder of Canada. Pleas from their governments were ignored, as were appeals from the

International Court of Justice in the cases of the LaGrand brothers and Stanley Faulder. The US

State Department did show signs of increased concern about Vienna Convention violations: Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright wrote to Texas Governor George Bush in an attempt to halt the execution of

Stanley Faulder, and the department was reportedly publishing and distributing training materials for police

regarding their obligations under the convention. In October, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

issued an advisory opinion regarding US obligations under the Vienna Convention and opined that the

failure to notify foreign nationals about their right to seek consular assistance was in all cases a violation of

due process under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on

Human Rights.

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