Death And Justice: A Response Essay, Research Paper

Death and Justice by Edward Koch

A response

In reading Mr. Koch s article Death and Justice, I was quite impressed with his opinions and ability to articulate them. I must say that I too am a supporter of the death penalty and would be hard pressed to argue my point more convincingly than Mr. Koch. Mr. Koch mentions several points, but the three that are the most poignant are his arguments concerning the barbaric, murderous, and imperfect aspects of the death penalty.

First, I do not feel that the death penalty is barbaric at all. As Mr. Koch points out, we have come a long way from drawing and quartering our criminals. Lethal injection is no more barbaric then a flu-shot. Many people are more concerned with the comfort and well being of our felons than our neighbors. What is barbaric is allowing a man to live after he heinously raped and murdered a young girl. I personally have no objection to the use of many long-forgotten methods, such as the guillotine, noose, firing squad, or headman s axe.

Specifically, murder is defined as the unlawful premeditated killing of a human being. Government-sanctioned executions, which follow the laws of the state, are not murder by this standard. Koch writes The execution of a lawfully condemned killer is no more murder than is legal imprisonment kidnapping. I feel this sums it up quite eloquently. The government is not an individual and is not limited by the rights and responsibilities of individuals. People who call the death penalty murder do so out of a sense of moral outrage rather then an intellectual consideration.

While our system of government, just like all others, is imperfect, we have several checks and balances built into the system to help ensure accuracy. There are rare occasions when the innocent are punished, but until all the criminals come forward on their own to admit their crimes, we can only continue on. Those people who are convicted are given chances to appeal their sentences. We cannot, for fear of making a mistake, bring our justice system to a halt. I also believe in Karma and believe that if someone is wrongly punished, then it either is retribution for other misdeeds or it will be made up to them in another life.

Ultimately, the death penalty is a question of morality. If it were just a matter of statistics, then it would be clear that it is a better deterrent the life imprisonment. Unfortunately, it is argued by people who cannot agree whether the felon in question deserves to die. I wholeheartedly believe in the death penalty and feel it is not used as often as it should.