Should the Death Penalty be Abolished?

The death penalty also known as capital punishment, is the government-sanctioned practice whereby a person is killed by the state as a punishment for a crime(Wikipedia).  This punishment is given by the state and is a controversial subject that has been heavily debated for decades. The death penalty was developed by King Hammurabi of Babylon in the 18th century B.C.(Reggio 1999). , which included practices of drowning, burning alive, and being beat to death. Over the years, the death penalty has become popular in other countries as well as in the United States. The death penalty is legal in 30 states in the United States (Wikipedia). The types of crimes that can result in the death penalty are treason and many forms of murder. Some people believe that the death penalty is just, while others find it morally wrong. The death penalty should be abolished because it is a cruel and unusual punishment, it affects society as a whole, and it plays a major role in religion.

The death penalty is a cruel punishment to do to someone. According to the ACLU, “the death penalty violates the constitutional ban against cruel and unusual punishment and the guarantees of due process of law and of equal protection under the law. The death penalty is uncivilized in theory and unfair and inequitable in practice.” The state should not have the right to kill human beings   Although the criminal is facing their time in jail, the death penalty should not be an option. No one should face the death penalty based on previous crimes. A life sentence given to a person should be the worst punishment given to a criminal. With a life sentence, a criminal has time to reflect on his or her crimes. In some cases, the criminal is not guilty and they have to face death row for a crime they did not commit. According to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE 2015), 258 wrongfully convicted people have been exonerated due to the introduction of DNA evidence.  Imagine a loved one that means the world to you that is in jail for a crime, but is given the death sentence for a crime that they did not even commit. How would you feel? How would your family feel? How do you think the criminal feels? The death sentence is not the right thing to do anybody. The family would feel thoughts about killing the offender. The family would feel like this would be the right thing to do because they would want the offender to suffer just like their loved one suffered. But this still is not the right to do because they would not feel justice from this. Killing the offender would not do anything because their loved one would still be dead. Although the death penalty is legal in many states, killing someone should not be a punishment. A criminal should just receive a life sentence instead. For example, according to Brandon L. Garrett who is a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law, the Williams’s case is a great reason to show how people are wrongly accused for something and have to face death row. Williams was in jail for the murder of Linda Gayle. The court executed Williams. The police did a DNA test and found that DNA on the weapon used to kill Gayle did not match William’s DNA, but this was after Williams had already been executed. Although Williams had been already executed the court never presented the DNA to the jury. The court never presented the evidence in court because Williams was already found guilty and the evidence would show how Williams was innocent for a crime he did not commit. Other than the Williams case, many other prisoners are found innocent after they have already been executed. Another reason why the court failed to show the evidence was because race played a part. According to ACLU, “People of color are far more likely to be executed than white people, especially if the victim is white.” People of color face many more consequences in America than white people because of discrimination.

Second, the United States and other countries uses the death penalty in order to lower or deterrent the crime rates. The death penalty does not lower crime. In fact, the crime rates stays the same or it is higher and police officers all over the country “do not believe the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder” (Dieter). According to Richard Dieter, the director of the Death Penalty Information Center, or DPIC, a study by Professor Michael Radelet and Traci Lacock of the University of Colorado found that 88% of people believe that the death penalty does not deterrent crime. This study was done in 2008. 5.3% of the people said yes and 6.8% of the people had no opinion. The same study was done in 1996 and the percentages were about the same as the ones done in 2008. The death penalty continues the cycle for violence. According to Dan Brook, he says “The death penalty makes society more dangerous by further increasing violence through the brutalization effect.” The Brutalization Effect is the cause and effect between executions and homicide rates. Killing people is wrong and people should not execute people who killed others. This situation relates to the saying two wrongs do not make a right. Killing someone is a wrong thing and the death penalty is not the right decision to do. If someone is in jail for murder, they should not face the death penalty.

Third, religion plays a good part as well with the death penalty. In the Ten Commandments, which is found in the book of Exodus, one of the commandments says thou shalt not kill. The death penalty and murdering someone goes against the ten commandments. In the Old Testament of the Bible, the people who believed in God believed in the death penalty but it was not called the death penalty at the time. In old times, it was called crucifixion or execution. Some Christians believe in the death penalty while some Christians and other religions believe that the death penalty is not the right thing to do and is morally wrong. Christians believe in forgiveness and compassion towards others. Christians also believe that God should be the only person to take someone’s life away. According to the National Association of Evangelicals (2015), “ a growing number of evangelicals now call for government entities to shift their resources away from pursuing the death penalty and to opt for life in prison without parole as the ultimate sanction. They argue that such a move would allow time for the exoneration of the wrongfully convicted, avoid the tragic error of wrongful execution, and advance a higher sense of justice.” This point is so true because if an inmate is in jail for life, people would feel more justice. Wrongfully convicted people would not have to lose their life unfairly, they would just have to face their time. Another reason why the death penalty should not be taken into consideration, is that the cost for this process is a lot of money. Many states that support the death penalty are probably in debt. The death penalty should be abolished because the United States cannot afford to maintain this process instead the United States should use this money for a better purpose. The death penalty is not only expensive to the government, but it is expensive to the society too. The United States uses enormous amounts of money or other resources that should be used to help enhance the government and to better poor living communities. The death penalty is a long process, which takes years to put a prisoner to death. According to Wikipedia, “In 2010, a death row inmate waited an average of 178 months (roughly 15 years) between sentencing and execution. Also, the rates in which inmates await has increased. According to Wikipedia, “The time between execution and sentencing has increased relatively steadily between 1977 and 2010, including a 22% jump between 1989 and 1990 and a similar jump between 2008 and 2009.” Since this process takes so long, some inmates on death row in the United States die of natural causes while awaiting execution (Wikipedia).

In conclusion, the death penalty should be abolished for various reasons. The death penalty is affecting the American society as a whole. The death penalty is going to later put America in a lot of debt, when the money the country is wasting for the death penalty could have been used to help the poor around the country. If this issue of the death penalty is not abolished soon, America will face a lot of troubling problems.

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