ENG 113

Mrs. Gates

25 Nov. 2019

Cease Capital Punishment

Let's say that a loved one falls victim at the hands of a serial killer, it is proven in a court of law by a grand jury that the serial killer committed the heinous crime and has killed nine other innocent people. Does this killer, who has no regard for human life nor any kind of moral code, deserve to die at the hands of the state? Most would agree that such a monster deserves certain death. Why keep this inhuman individual alive, feed and house him for the remainder of his life, placing a strain on an already overpopulated prison system? The common belief is that imposing the death penalty on this one individual will deter others from committing murder, which fundamentally was the main objective of establishing capital punishment. Capital punishment was instated by many countries across the globe as a means to punish individuals for murder, treason, adultery, rape, and fraud. Over the years, many countries have abolished capital punishment or have become more selective in its implementation, due to a plethora of reasons. Capital punishment should be abolished because it is not an effective deterrent to crime, it is more costly than life imprisonment and it is frequently based on wrongful convictions.

There is no substantial evidence or measured statistics that the death penalty is the most effective deterrent to crime, in fact, "There are as many murders committed in jurisdictions with the death penalty as in those without" (Andre & Velasquez). Since researchers suggest that it does not matter where a person is located, whether they are in a state that has capital punishment or not, the death penalty sentence has no true influence on them. If the criminal wants to commit

an unspeakable crime that is worthy of death, they will do it. A sociology professor and a graduate student from The University of Colorado-Boulder held a study, receiving opinions about the deterrence effects of the death penalty on criminals from leading criminology experts. The individuals holding the study found, "Eighty-eight percent of respondents do not think that the death penalty deters murder—a level of consensus comparable to the agreement among scientists regarding global climate change" ("Clear Scientific"), according to Professor Michael Radelet author of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology. Comprehending the fact that most individuals who are experts in the criminology field have a very similar opinion regarding the deterrence effects on the death penalty is no coincidence. It proves the fact that, in almost all cases, the argument that the status of capital punishment will instill fear in individuals, causing there to be a deterrence effect when it comes to committing crimes worthy of the penalty.

Life imprisonment is a cheaper alternative than capital punishment and most states should review existing laws not from a moral but from a financial stand point. Prisoners on death row are frequently incarcerated for up to twenty years before being subjected to the lethal injection. The cost of a long term incarceration then the added costs of subjecting the convicted to the death penalty costs excessively more than life imprisonment. The 82-year-old, self-described right-wing Republican, Donald McCartin, who is also known as The Hanging Judge of Orange County claims "It's a waste of time and money" (Associated Press). "The only thing it does is prolong the agony of the victims' families." According to Amnesty International, "The average cost of a case that does not invlove capital punishment is approximately seven hundred fourty thousand dollars. Cases that involve capital punishment cost approximately one million two hundred and sixty thousand dollars" ("Death Penalty Cost"). These numbers are staggering in terms of the burden criminals place on the economy and the prison system. Death penalty cases

cost more due to the costs involved with having attorneys with specialized skills, extra security measures and the processing of DNA evidence.

The astronomical expense of convicting a criminal to the death penalty has been proven in recent years to be wasted tax payer money, with DNA and other methods of evindence collection convicts sentenced to death have been exhonorated or resentenced in significant numbers. Death penalty cases go through a rigorous process of appeals to minimize the posibility of wrongful conviction, however the system is far from perfect. The US Death Row study concludes chillingly that "the great majority of innocent defendants who are convicted of capital murder in the United States are neither executed nor exonerated. They are sentenced, or resentenced to prison for life, and then forgotten" (Pilkington). Wrongful execution is a gross miscarriage of justice in a system that was created to protect the innocent until proven guilty. Prior to modern science many innocent people were convicted and sentenced to death on circumstantial evidence. An article from NBC News stated, "In 2000, then-Gov. George H. Ryan placed a moratorium on executions after 13 people had been exonerated from death row for reasons including genetic testing and recanted testimony. Ryan declared the system "so fraught with error that it has come close to the ultimate nightmare, the state's taking of innocent life" (Associated Press). According to a study authorized by Samuel R. Gross, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, "One in twenty five convicted to death are innocent making the innocence rate four point one percent" (Levy). Using capital punishment as a means of sentencing should be abolished based on recent findings, even with closely scutinized cases the system is flawed and taking chances with human life is not acceptable.

Is the death penalty the ultimate punishment for crime? In the words of a death row inmate, "If you really want to kill someone, give them life without parole" says 52-year-old

Gordon "Randy" Steidl convicted murderer, "It's worse than dying" (Associated Press). Being trapped in a small space surrounded by inhuman individuals would certainly feel more like a death sentence than a quick and clean exit from this world. Capital punishment should be abolished because it is not an effective deterrent to crime, it is more costly than life imprisonment and it is frequently based on wrongful convictions. Criminals are not deterred by the threat of imprisonment or a death sentence because at the time that they are committing a crime they are not objectively looking at their actions and weighing the impacts that action will have. Sentencing convicted criminals to life imprisonment is a harsher punishment in some ways that death and it is by far more cost effective than long term imprisonment leading to lethal injection. Although in recent times it seems more difficult to obtain a guilty verdict on circumstantial evidence as was common place in the past, there is still a chance that wrongful conviction can occur, providing ample time for appeals can perhaps save an innocent life from being taken by the state. Allowing the state to perpetrate premeditated murder in the name of the law inherently violates the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment and it goes against the fundamental beliefs of a democratic society.

Works Cited

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~~EDIT~~ Monday

Mrs. Gates' Essay Checklist

sub. Monday +5
APD 11/22 +10
+15

-17
+15
-2

98
+2 - saw 2nd essay
100

- ☑ Strong thesis good
  - -1 ☒ Highlighted in YELLOW
- ☐ Relevant topic sentences
  - -1 ☒ Highlighted in GREEN
- ☐ Correctly embedded evidence 1 w/o punc -1
  - -1 ☒ Highlighted in PINK or BLUE
  - ☐ Quotes of 4 lines or more adhere to special formatting rules
- ☐ Student adequately discusses/analyzes the evidence
- ☑ Correct parenthetical citations (MLA)
  - ☐ Author's last name and page number
  - ☐ Page number only if author is mentioned within the sentence/lead
  - ☑ Last name only if there are no page numbers
  - ☑ Period goes AFTER the parenthetical
- ☑ Matching Work Cited entries
- ☑ Minimum 3 sources
- ☑ Works Cited Page (MLA)
  - -5 ☐ Hanging indent what happened to the hanging indent?
  - ☑ Organized alphabetically
  - ☑ Citations are complete
  - ☑ Quotations and/or italics used as applicable
  - ☑ Proper punctuation
- ☑ Paper is double-spaced
- ☑ Heading on page 1
- ☑ Times New Roman, 12 pt font
- -1 ☒ Header with last name and page number no pg #
- ☑ Paper is not too dependent on sources
- ☑ Essay is well-written
- ☑ Student avoids the use of contractions and slang
- ☑ Paper is free from first and second person pronouns
  - ☐ First person pronouns *may* be suitable in the introduction
  - ☐ Second person pronouns are *only* acceptable inside quoted material

-1 punc.
a couple of awkward sentences -1
~~typos/spelling -1ea~~
Italics needed w/o the paper -1

make sure stays on its own page -1
watch spacing -1

NOTES:

Students are to submit their revised essays in Moodle by NOON on Wednesday, November 27th.

Bonus points are available for complete essays submitted by Monday (no specified time).

They are to leave the highlighting on their papers when submitting.

Death penalty