



# The Death Penalty in Kansas

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## **A sentence of life without the possibility of parole keeps Kansas safe.**

Kansas already has a severe prison sentence for the most heinous murders—*life without the possibility of parole*. Life without parole keeps Kansans safe from violent criminals without risking the harmful effects of the death penalty.

## **The Kansas death penalty is inconsistent.**

In Kansas, geography can determine who lives and who dies. Half of the death sentences in Kansas have been handed down in just one county—Sedgwick. A similar crime committed in another part of the state is far less likely to receive a death sentence. For example, Wyandotte County, which has a similar violent crime rate to Sedgwick County, has had zero death sentences. **By replacing the death penalty with life without parole, we can ensure that the law will be justly and uniformly applied to every case.**

## **There is a real risk of executing an innocent person.**

In a death penalty case, even a small mistake can risk executing an innocent person. Kansas is no exception. Kansas has had three felony exonerations due to mistakes made during trials that led innocent men to be convicted of crimes they never committed. A quarter of Kansas death sentences have been overturned due to these kinds of errors made during trials.

## **The death penalty fails victims' families.**

The death penalty only prolongs the pain and trauma of losing a loved one for the families of murder victims. Non-death penalty cases are usually settled at the initial trial while death penalty trials and appeals typically last more than a decade. **A life without parole sentence begins as soon as the victims' families leave the courtroom.**

## **The death penalty does not prevent violent crime.**

Death penalty cases in Kansas can cost up to 70% more than non-death penalty cases, diverting scarce resources from crime prevention or victims' support services. Surveys show that law enforcement officials recognize that the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime. Instead, they would like to see those resources put toward adding more police. A key study also found that the costs of the death penalty are covered primarily by raising taxes and cutting services like police funding.

**For more information please contact:**

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