

Cost and the Death Penalty

*With local experts Roger Werholtz and Brian Pack
2013 Abolition Conference*

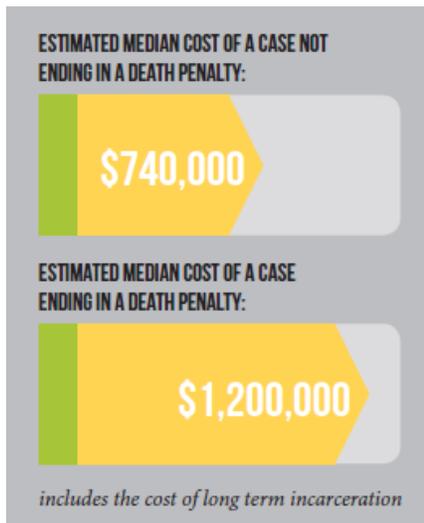
Cost Overview

Three recent Kansas studies have looked at the cost of the death penalty:

2003 Legislative Post Audit, "Costs Incurred for Death Penalty Cases"

2004 and 2009 Judicial Council Death Penalty Advisory Committee Report

Both studies concluded that Kansas would realize a cost savings by replacing the death penalty with a sentence of Life Without Parole.



"Cases in which the death penalty was sought and imposed could cost about 70 percent more than cases in which the death penalty wasn't sought."

(2003 Legislative Post Audit)

"To try capital murder defendant James Kraig Kahler...Osage County residents are paying higher taxes. 'In 2010, we raised the mill levy more than 2 mills' specifically to cover trial costs."

(County Commissioner Ken Kuykendall in *The Topeka Capital Journal*)

Cost and the Department of Corrections

With Roger Werholtz, MSW - Former Kansas Secretary of Corrections (2002-2010), and former Deputy Secretary of Corrections (1987-2002)

- How does the Kansas Department of Corrections handle inmates sentenced to death, and how is this different from inmates sentenced to Life Without Parole?
- What changes would occur if the death penalty is repealed?
- Do prisons need the death penalty to keep them safe?
- Case Study: Colorado

“We should repeal the death penalty and focus our energy and resources on policies and practices that have real and tangible benefits for the people of our state.”

(Roger Werholtz, former Kansas Secretary of Corrections)

“Life without parole is an extremely harsh sentence that punishes violent criminals and keeps Kansans safe. We don’t need the death penalty.”

(Ben Coates, former Director of the Kansas Sentencing Commission)

Cost and Law Enforcement

With Brian Pack, M.S. - Overland Park Police Officer and Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology at the University of Missouri at Kansas City

- What are police and others in law enforcement saying about the death penalty?
- Does the death penalty help to deter crime? And what does it mean when we say that something is an “effective deterrent”?
- Report: “Smart on Crime: National Poll of Police Chiefs Puts Capital Punishment on Bottom of Law Enforcement Priorities” (2009)
 - 500 randomly selected police chiefs considered the death penalty the **least efficient** use of taxpayer money, and 57 percent said that “the death penalty does little to prevent violent crimes because **perpetrators rarely consider the consequences** when engaged in violence.”

“Give a law enforcement professional like me that \$250 million, and I’ll show you how to reduce crime. The death penalty isn’t anywhere on my list.”

(Police Chief James Abbott, West Orange, NJ)

“I have come to the conclusion that the death penalty is not a meaningful solution to crime. There is simply too much evidence suggesting that it has too many problems.”

(Michael Birzer, former Sedgwick County Sheriff’s Deputy)

Frequently asked questions

What is so expensive?

Why are the appeals so long?

What have other states with the death penalty found?

What about plea bargaining?

Notes:

For more information, contact the Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

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