



Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

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DEATH PENALTY DECLINES BY EVERY MEASURE ACROSS U.S.

(York PA) By every measure – public opinion, death sentences, and executions – the death penalty continued to decline in 2016. Jurors in Pennsylvania returned just one new death sentence, mirroring the national trend. The Death Penalty Information Center’s Year End Report shows that the number of new death sentences in 2016 was the lowest since 1972. The 20 total executions carried out this year, were the fewest since 1991 and were done by only five states.

Two Pennsylvanians, Anthony Wright and Kevin Siehl, were exonerated this year when after being convicted of murder. Prosecutors had sought the death penalty against both of these men, who spent a combined 50 years in prison for crimes they did not commit. Since 1976, six men who were sentenced to death in Pennsylvania have been exonerated. During that same time period, only three men have been executed. All three of them were “volunteers” who gave up their rights to appeal.

An analysis by *The Reading Eagle* found that Pennsylvania’s death penalty system has cost taxpayers \$816 million since 1978, producing just three executions over that time period.

The following quote can be attributed to Kathleen Lucas, Executive Director of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty:

“This year, we have seen more evidence of the serious problems in our death penalty system. Our criminal justice system is administered by humans and humans make mistakes. As long as we have a death penalty on the books, we risk executing an innocent person. The trends clearly show that the death penalty is falling out of favor. It is time for Pennsylvania to reconsider this costly and dangerous system.”

To speak about the state of the death penalty in Pennsylvania, contact Kathleen Lucas at KLucas@padp.org or 717-236-4840

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