



# Abolishing the Death Penalty in Ohio Would Be Good for Justice

Since 1979, 11 people in Ohio have been exonerated while on death row awaiting execution.

A wrongful conviction is perhaps the worst possible outcome in the criminal justice system—and it is made unthinkable worse when the result of a wrongful conviction is execution by the government. Even one wrongful conviction resulting in the death of an innocent person should be considered intolerable. Unfortunately, wrongful convictions occur in death penalty cases at an alarming rate. Since 1979, 11 people in Ohio have been exonerated while on death row awaiting execution.

The Death Penalty Information Center maintains a database of death row exonerations in the United States. The database only includes cases where individuals were acquitted of all charges, had all their charges dismissed, or received a complete pardon based on evidence of their innocence. It provides very conservative estimates and likely understates the true number of innocent people who have been sentenced to death in America.

## Death Row Exonerations Nationwide

- Since 1972, over 185 Americans have been exonerated while awaiting executions on death row.
- 68% of exonerations involved perjury or false accusations.
- 69% of exonerations involved misconduct by officials.

## Death Row Exonerations in Ohio

- Since 1979, 11 individuals have been exonerated while on death row awaiting execution in Ohio.
- Nine of those cases involved perjury or false accusations.
- Ten cases involved official misconduct.
- Cuyahoga County, Ohio, has had the second highest number of death row exonerations among all counties in the United States. All six of the death row exonerations in Cuyahoga involved misconduct by officials.

In Ohio, for every

**6.2 executions**



**1 innocent person**

**on death row has been exonerated**

**20**  
**YEARS**

**On average, exonerees in Ohio had been on death row for 20 years.**

**The longest sentence served by a death row exoneree was 39 years.**

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY CONTACT

- Vittorio Nastasi, Director of Criminal Justice Policy (Vittorio.Nastasi@reason.org)

Reason Foundation is a national 501(c)(3) public policy research and education organization with expertise across a range of policy areas, including public sector pensions, transportation, infrastructure, education, and criminal justice. For more information about Reason Foundation, visit [reason.org](http://reason.org)





# Abolishing the Death Penalty in Ohio Would Be Good for Taxpayers

While the moral issue of the state executing citizens (especially considering wrongful convictions) is the most significant reason to abolish the death penalty, it should also be abolished because it is significantly more expensive than alternative sentences, such as life without parole. Capital cases cost Ohio taxpayers millions of dollars more than other forms of sentencing, even though Ohio's last execution was in July 2018.

## Recent Studies on the High Costs of Death Penalty Cases

- A 2017 analysis of capital punishment costs in Oklahoma found that, on average, cases where prosecutors seek the death penalty cost \$700,000 more than in comparable non-capital murder cases.
- A 2016 cost analysis of death penalty cases in Oregon found that costs for aggravated murder cases resulting in death sentences cost between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 more than similar aggravated murder cases where the death penalty was not pursued.
- A 2015 fiscal analysis in Indiana found that murder cases involving the death penalty were over 4.5 times more expensive than murder cases where prosecutors sought life without parole.

Death penalty cases are

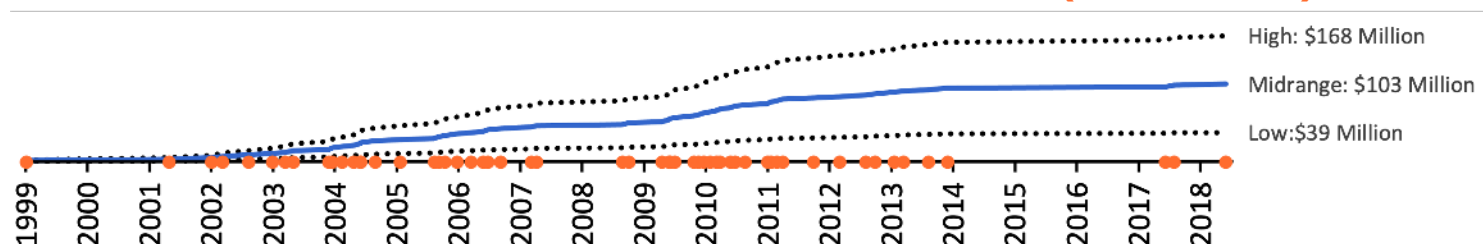
# 4.5X

more expensive than comparable cases where prosecutors sought life without parole.

## Costs of the Death Penalty in Ohio

- According to the Ohio Legislative Service Commission, capital cases exceed the total costs of life imprisonment cases by between \$1 million and \$3 million per case.
- At that rate, with 132 individuals currently on death row, Ohio could have saved between \$132 million and \$396 million by trying the cases as life without parole cases rather than seeking the death penalty.
- Even using more conservative estimates suggests Ohio could've saved between \$92 million and \$132 million by pursuing life without the possibility of parole rather than the death penalty.
- Moreover, the 56 executions conducted in Ohio since 1999 are estimated to have cost the state between \$39 million and \$168 million.

## Estimated Cumulative Cost of Executions in Ohio (1999-2018)



### CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY CONTACT

- Vittorio Nastasi, Director of Criminal Justice Policy (Vittorio.Nastasi@reason.org)

Reason Foundation is a national 501(c)(3) public policy research and education organization with expertise across a range of policy areas, including public sector pensions, transportation, infrastructure, education, and criminal justice. For more information about Reason Foundation, visit [reason.org](http://reason.org)

