
The death penalty essay

The death penalty is something that many people do not have a clear decision on. Many people support the death penalty, while others wish for the death penalty to be abolished, and there are some that support the death penalty, but only in certain cases. My personal opinion on the death penalty is it should be administered only in cases of particularly cruel crimes, or serial crimes such as serial murder. Groups that support the death penalty often say that is a deterrent for future criminals who are thinking of committing murders or other heinous crimes. I disagree with this statement because criminals do not think of the consequences of their actions when they are committing a crime, nor do they care. Amnesty International, which opposes the death penalty, reports that scientific studies have not produced any conclusive evidence showing that capital punishment is a deterrent for future crimes to be committed. I believe the only deterrent for a murderer to not commit a crime again would be execution.

Various people who are opposed to the death penalty say that capital punishment condemns the innocent to die. According to Amendment V in the United States Bill of Rights, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital crime, or otherwise, an infamous crime unless on a presentment of an indictment of a grand jury" (except in military cases). While it is true that a few innocent people have "slipped through the cracks" of the justice system and been convicted and executed unfairly, it is extremely rare that this type of situation would happen. By the time that all appeals are exhausted, it is most likely that the attorneys will find new evidence to support alleged criminal's innocence from examining the case so many times. Its adversaries have called capital punishment cruel and unusual, but I disagree.

According to Amendment V in the United States Bill of Rights, "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." Even with this amendment in place, many people question the constitutionality of capital punishment because of Amendment VIII which states, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." The question has arisen concerning the morality of capital punishment. In the Christian perspective, we should look to the Bible for our answers on the morality of capital punishment. God instituted capital punishment in the book of Leviticus 24:17 and Leviticus 24:20-21. Verse 17 of Leviticus 24 says, "And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death." Verses 20 and 21 of Leviticus 24 say, "Breach for breach, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again." "And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death."

The bias of the American as well as International judicial systems is a major cause of worry regarding capital punishment. According to Amendment VI in the United States Bill of Rights, "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed." We, as Christians, should obey the government no matter what their decision may be unless it goes against the Bible. God instituted the judicial system to provide fair punishments for crimes. Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." This verse tells us that the government has the authority to instigate capital punishment if they feel it is necessary, and we should comply with their decision. Many are disturbed by the execution of mentally incompetent

criminals.

The U.S Supreme Court on June 20, 2002, declared that the execution of the mentally retarded is unconstitutional, as well as cruel and unusual punishment. A particularly sad case of a mentally retarded person being put on death row is the case of Earl Washington, who had an IQ of 69. In 1983, Washington was coerced by police to confess to the rape and murder of a woman in Culpeper, Virginia in 1982. Washington was sentenced to death in 1984, but sixteen years later DNA evidence proved his innocence, and he received an absolute pardon.

I support the death penalty in special cases, and I believe also that the guilt of the criminal should be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, which is the constitutional way of life.

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