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DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER

NCJRS

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FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

February 21, 1995

ACQUISITIONS

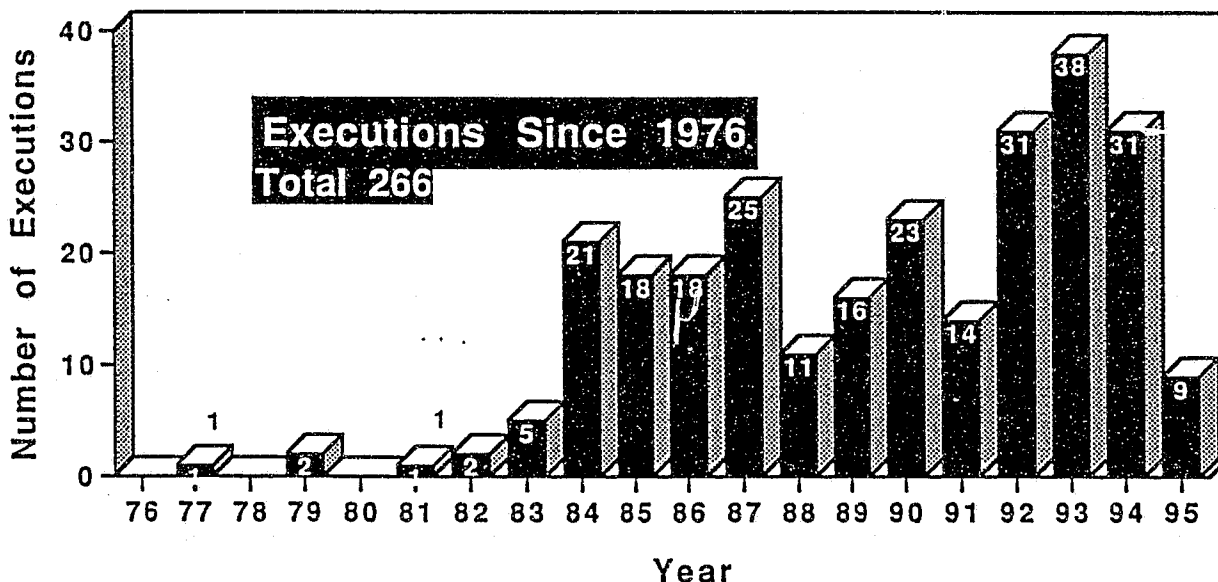
STATES WITH THE DEATH PENALTY (37)

Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	N. Hampshire*	Pennsylvania	Washington
Arizona	Georgia	Maryland	New Jersey	S. Carolina	<u>Wyoming*</u>
Arkansas	Idaho	Mississippi	New Mexico	S. Dakota	
California	Illinois	Missouri	N. Carolina	Tennessee	-plus
Colorado	Indiana	Montana	Ohio	Texas	U.S. Gov't
Connecticut	Kansas*	Nebraska	Oklahoma	Utah	U.S. Military
Delaware	Kentucky	Nevada	Oregon	Virginia	

*Indicates jurisdictions with no one on death row.

STATES WITHOUT THE DEATH PENALTY (13)

Alaska	Maine	Minnesota	Rhode Island	<u>Wisconsin</u>
Hawaii	Mass.	New York	Vermont	-plus
Iowa	Michigan	N.Dakota	W. Virginia	District of Columbia



EXECUTIONS SINCE 1976 BY METHOD USED

Lethal Injection	(28 states)	139	
Electrocution	(12 states)	115	
Gas Chamber	(7 states)	9	
Hanging	(4 states)	2	*some states authorize
Firing Squad	(2 states)	1	more than one method

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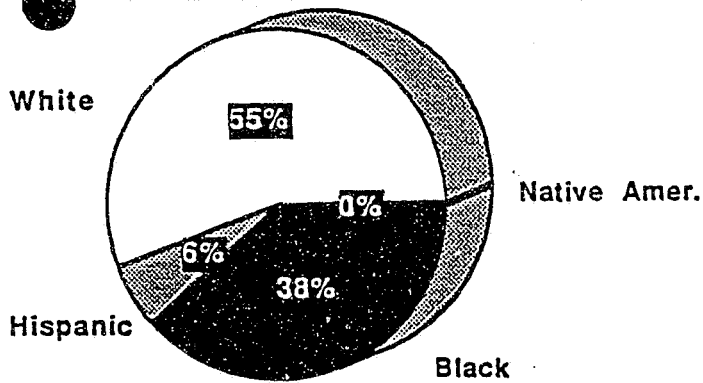
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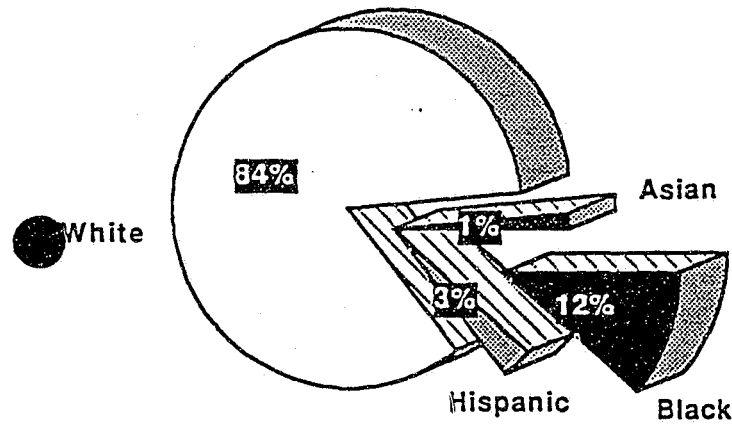
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Race of Defendants Executed



Black	- 102
Hispanic	- 16
White	- 147
Native Amer.	- 1

Race of Victims: Almost All Capital Cases Involve White Victims



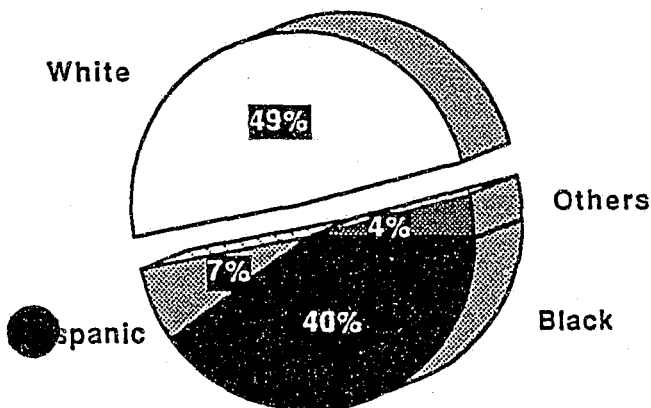
About 85% of the victims in death penalty cases are white, even though 50% of murder victims are black.

Persons Executed for Interracial Murders

White Def./ Black Victim	2
Black Def./ White Victim	71

"In 82% of the studies [reviewed], race of the victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder or receiving the death penalty, i.e., those who murdered whites were found more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered blacks."
 -U.S. General Accounting Office, Death Penalty Sentencing, Feb., 1990.

Race of Death Row Inmates: Half Are Minorities



Black	- 1180
Hispanic	- 205
White	- 1446
Others	- 117

Total: 2,948 (October, 1994)
 All death row figures are from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund

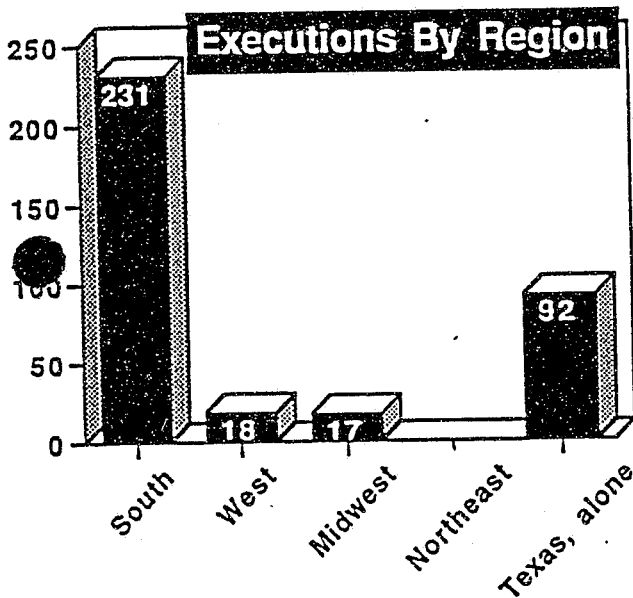
NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS BY STATE SINCE 1976

Texas	92	(14) [7]	S. Carolina	4
Florida	33	(1)	Utah	4
Virginia	25	(2) [1]	Arizona	3
Louisiana	21		Indiana	3 (1)
Georgia	18	(1)	Oklahoma	3
Missouri	11		California	2
Alabama	10		Illinois	2 (1)
Arkansas	9	(5)	Washington	2 (1)
N. Carolina	7	(1) [1]	Idaho	1 (1)
Nevada	5		Maryland	1 (1)
Delaware	4	(1)	Nebraska	1 (1)
Mississippi	4		Wyoming	1

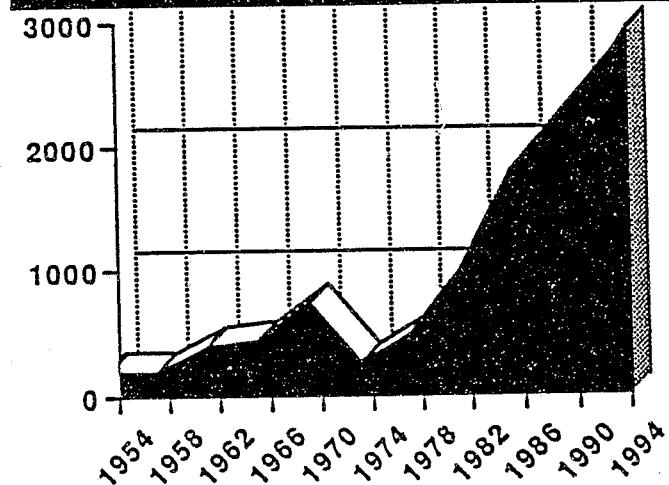
-1994 executions in parentheses
-1995 executions in brackets

DEATH ROW INMATES BY STATE

Calif.	396	Louisiana	41
Texas	390	Arkansas	38
Florida	349	Kentucky	28
Penn.	168	Idaho	21
Illinois	163	Delaware	14
N. Carolina	145	Maryland	14
Ohio	137	Oregon	14
Alabama	131	Wash.	13
Oklahoma	124	Utah	11
Arizona	122	Nebraska	9
Georgia	105	N. Jersey	9
Tenn.	101	Montana	8
Missouri	92	U.S. Milit.	8
Nevada	70	U.S. Govt.	6
S. Carolina	57	Conn.	5
Virginia	55	Colorado	3
Indiana	53	New Mexico	2
Miss.	53	S. Dakota	2



Size of Death Row: 1953-1994



WOMEN AND THE DEATH PENALTY

- There are currently 41 women on death row. This constitutes 1.4% of the total death row population.
- 1 woman has been executed since 1976: Velma Barfield - NC, 11/2/84

JUVENILES AND THE DEATH PENALTY

- There are currently 39 death row inmates (all male) sentenced as juveniles, about 1.3% of the total death row.
- 3/4 of the sentences are for 17 year old offenders, 1/4 are for 16 year olds.
- 9 men have been executed for crimes committed as juveniles since 1976.
- Jurisdictions with an age minimum of 18 for capital punishment: CA, CO, CT, IL, KS, MD, NE, NJ, NM, OH, OR, TN, WA (by Court decision), and U.S. Other states have either no minimum age or a minimum under 18.

MENTAL RETARDATION AND THE DEATH PENALTY

- To date, 12 offenders with mental retardation have been executed.
- Ten states forbid execution of the mentally retarded: AR, CO, GA, KS, KY, IN, MD, NM, TN, WA, and U.S.

FINANCIAL FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

- The most comprehensive study in the country found that the death penalty costs North Carolina \$2 million per execution over the costs of a non-death penalty murder case with a sentence of imprisonment for life. (Duke University, May 1993). On a national basis, these figures translate to an extra cost of half a billion dollars since 1976 for having the death penalty.
- The death penalty costs California \$90 million annually beyond the ordinary costs of the justice system-\$78 million of that total is incurred at the trial level. (Sacramento Bee, March 28, 1988).
- Florida spent an estimated \$57 million on the death penalty from 1973 to 1988 to achieve 18 executions - that is an average of \$3.2 million per execution. (Miami Herald, July 10, 1988).
- In Texas, a death penalty case costs an average of \$2.3 million, about three times the cost of imprisoning someone in a single cell at the highest security level for 40 years. (Dallas Morning News, March 8, 1992).

INNOCENCE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

- Since 1970, 48 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. (Staff Report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil & Constitutional Rights, Oct. 1993).
- Researchers Radelet & Bedau found 23 cases since 1900 where innocent people were executed. (*In Spite of Innocence*, Northeastern Univ. Press, 1992).

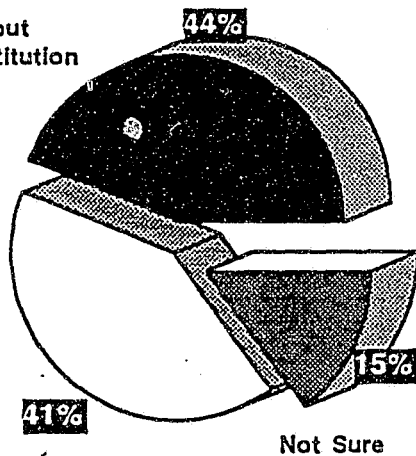
PUBLIC OPINION AND THE DEATH PENALTY

- Public support for the death penalty drops to below 50% when voters are offered alternative sentences. More people would support life without parole plus restitution to the victim's family than would choose the death penalty.
- Problems with the death penalty raise significant doubts in people's minds. 58% of those surveyed were concerned about the danger of executing innocent people. 48% had doubts due to racism in the application of the death penalty, 46% have doubts about the high costs, and 42% have doubts related to the failure of deterrence.

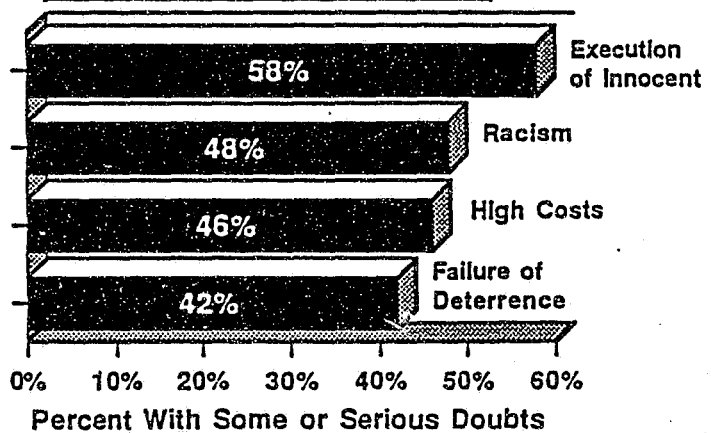
More People Support Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Prefer Life Without Parole Plus Restitution

Prefer Death Penalty



Public Has Doubts About the Death Penalty



SOURCES:

- NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Capital Punishment 1992"
- Professor Victor L. Streib, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Cleveland State University
- Greenberg/Lake and Tarrance Group National Poll (April 1993)

The Death Penalty Information Center has available more extensive reports on the costs of the death penalty, on public opinion and alternative sentences, and on the danger of executing the innocent.