

Media Advisory through September 26, 2024

Contact: Hayley Bedard at [hbedard@deathpenaltyinfo.org](mailto:hbedard@deathpenaltyinfo.org) or 202-289-2275

## **1600<sup>th</sup> Scheduled Execution Demonstrates Disconnect Between Elected Officials and Declining Public Support for the Death Penalty**

The Death Penalty Information Center (DPI) has [documented](#) every execution in the U.S. in the modern death penalty era.

**WASHINGTON, DC**—The United States is expected to reach a milestone in the administration of capital punishment this week. If all four scheduled executions proceed in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Alabama, the U.S. will reach the 1600<sup>th</sup> execution in the modern era of the death penalty, despite public opinion polls showing growing concerns about the fairness and accuracy of the death penalty and declining support for its use.

“All the data indicate that the American public is increasingly uncomfortable with use of the death penalty, yet elected officials persist in scheduling secretive, costly executions that do not reflect accurately the priorities of the communities they serve,” says Robin M. Maher, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center. “It shows a clear disconnect between the agendas of elected officials and the reality that Americans are turning away from the death penalty.”

The majority of U.S. states have either abandoned use of the death penalty entirely or paused executions (29 states plus the District of Columbia and the federal government). A [Gallup poll](#) recently found that the percentage of Americans who believe the death penalty is applied unfairly increased to 50%, while the overall level of support for the death penalty has been steadily decreasing since 1994, currently at a slim majority of 53%. Unlike past years, the death penalty isn't among [top voter priorities](#) during this election year, and neither national political party even mentions use of the death penalty in their official platforms.

The decline in public support can be viewed as a consequence of the many problems with the use of the death penalty. Earlier this year, Larry Roberts was the 200<sup>th</sup> person exonerated from death row. His release means that there has been one exoneration for every 8 executions. DPI has also identified more than 600 death sentences with prosecutorial misconduct so significant that it resulted in a reversal of the conviction or death sentence, or an exoneration.

Longstanding concerns about systemic racism have also persisted. Of the last 100 individuals executed in the United States, a disproportionate number (43%) have been people of color, including 31 who were Black. 72% of the victims in those cases were white.

Three jurisdictions were responsible for more than half (56%) of the total executions during the last five years: Texas (29), Oklahoma (14), and the federal government (13), which has had a moratorium in place since 2020. Texas and Oklahoma both have scheduled executions this week. Fewer than 50 new death sentences have been imposed in each of the last five years, showing that juries are increasingly rejecting the death penalty as an option, and those new sentences have occurred in just 12 states.

For more information about each of the almost 1600 individuals executed, please visit the Death Penalty Information Center's Execution Database, [here](#). To learn more about the issues pertaining to capital punishment, please visit the Death Penalty Information Center's website at [deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://deathpenaltyinfo.org). To arrange an interview with Robin M. Maher, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, please contact [media@deathpenaltyinfo.org](mailto:media@deathpenaltyinfo.org) or 202-289-2275.

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The Death Penalty Information Center (DPI) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to serve the media, policymakers, and the general public with data and analysis on issues concerning capital punishment and the people it affects. DPI does not take a position on the death penalty itself but is critical of problems in its application.