

The number of individuals executed remained nearly the same as in 2023, with 25 executions in nine states.

This was the tenth consecutive year with fewer than 30 executions. Utah, South Carolina, and Indiana conducted their first executions in 2024 after more than a decade hiatus.

This year, Alabama became the first state to use nitrogen gas to execute prisoners.

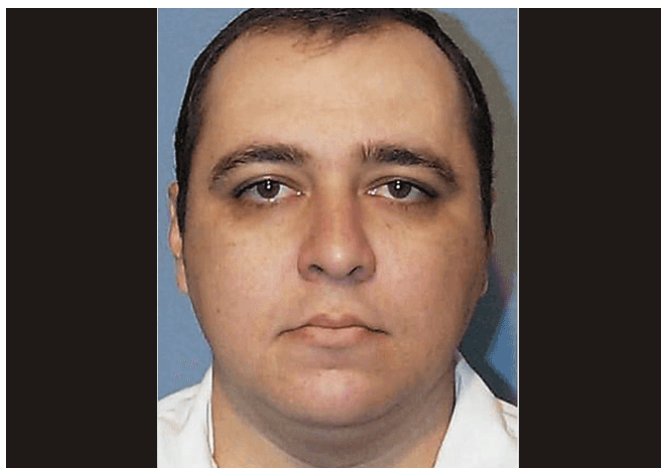
People Executed This Year Likely Would Not Be Sentenced To Death If Tried Today

As in past years, the vast majority of people executed in 2024 had at least one of the following vulnerabilities: an IQ in the intellectually disabled range and/or brain damage; evidence of serious mental illness; and/or a history of severe childhood trauma or abuse.

All but one (96%) of the people executed this year had records of at least one such vulnerability. Six of the 25 (24%) people executed were 21 or younger at the time of the crime for which they were executed.

While the death penalty is allowed for defendants who were at least age 18 at the time of the crime, a growing body of neuroscience research indicates that the juvenile brain is not fully developed until approximately the mid-20s.

Kenneth Smith, who was executed in Alabama on January 25, was sentenced to death under a law that has since been repealed but which has [no retroactive effect](#).



Kenneth Smith

The jury at his trial voted 11 – 1 in favor of a life sentence, but the judge overrode that recommendation and sentenced him to death.

Judicial override was repealed in Alabama in 2017. [According to the Equal Justice Initiative](#), Mr. Smith was the twelfth person executed in Alabama despite a jury vote for life.



Richard Moore

[Richard Moore](#) was executed in South Carolina on November 1 for the killing of a store clerk.

Mr. Moore had entered the store unarmed but shot James Mahoney, the store clerk, during a struggle that began when Mr. Mahoney pointed a weapon at Mr. Moore and shot him. Mr. Moore's clemency petition was supported by former prosecutor and Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) Jon Ozmint, who said that "objectively reviewed, Richard's crime would never have been considered for the death penalty in most counties in our state."

Mr. Ozmint also stated that "dozens of murderers currently serving life sentences in SCDC had more serious criminal histories and committed far more heinous killings." Prosecutors at Mr. Moore's trial also struck all eligible Black individuals from the jury that sentenced him to death. South Carolina Supreme Court Justice Kay Hearn said, "Richard Moore will be put to death for a sentence that I do not believe is legal."

Several prisoners executed in 2024 had significant mitigating evidence that was never heard by the juries that sentenced them to death.

In Texas, Ivan Cantu's trial attorneys did not seek a neuropsychological evaluation and

therefore his jury never learned that he had bipolar disorder that was compounded by his history of drug abuse.

Willie Pye, who was executed in Georgia, grew up desperately poor in a home with no electricity or water, experienced childhood trauma and abuse, and had an IQ of 68, but his jury did not hear any of that evidence.

Joseph Corcoran in Indiana was allowed to waive his appeals and "volunteer" for execution even after three separate psychologists diagnosed him with paranoid schizophrenia.



Photo courtesy of friends of Loran Cole.

[Loran Cole](#) was executed in Florida despite experiencing "horrific and tragic" abuse at the state-run Dozier School for Boys. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed Mr. Cole's execution warrant just a month after signing a bill that set aside \$20 million to compensate children who were sent to Dozier and another reform school between 1940 and 1975 and "subjected to mental, physical or sexual abuse perpetrated by school personnel."

Mr. Cole's attorneys alleged that if his "jury had known about the severe abuse that happened at Dozier, and Florida's willingness to acknowledge the severe problems at Dozier to the extent that designated victims are entitled to reparations, there is a reasonable probability the newly discovered evidence would yield a less severe sentence."

Old and New Execution Methods Create Controversy

Allegations of difficulties obtaining certain lethal injection drugs led some states to turn to alternative methods of execution. On January 25, Alabama became the first state to use nitrogen gas to execute a prisoner. Media witness Lee Hedgepeth [reported](#), “This was the fifth execution that I’ve witnessed in Alabama, and I have never seen such a violent reaction to an execution.”

There was intense media attention from national and international media surrounding the use of this untested method and [expressions of “alarm”](#) from international human rights organizations.

South Carolina [resumed executions](#) after a 13-year hiatus when the South Carolina Supreme Court overturned a lower court decision and found the state’s process giving prisoners the choice of three execution methods — lethal injection, electrocution, and firing squad — did not constitute “cruel, corporal, or unusual punishment.” In early 2023, South Carolina passed legislation shielding the identities of drug manufacturers and execution team members from the public. After that law passed, the state announced it had obtained lethal injection drugs.

John Blume, an attorney for Khalil Allah (aka Freddie Owens), who was executed on September 20, said, “the lack of transparency about the source of the execution drugs, how they were obtained and whether (they) can bring about as painless a death as possible is still of grave concern to the lawyers that represent persons on death row.”

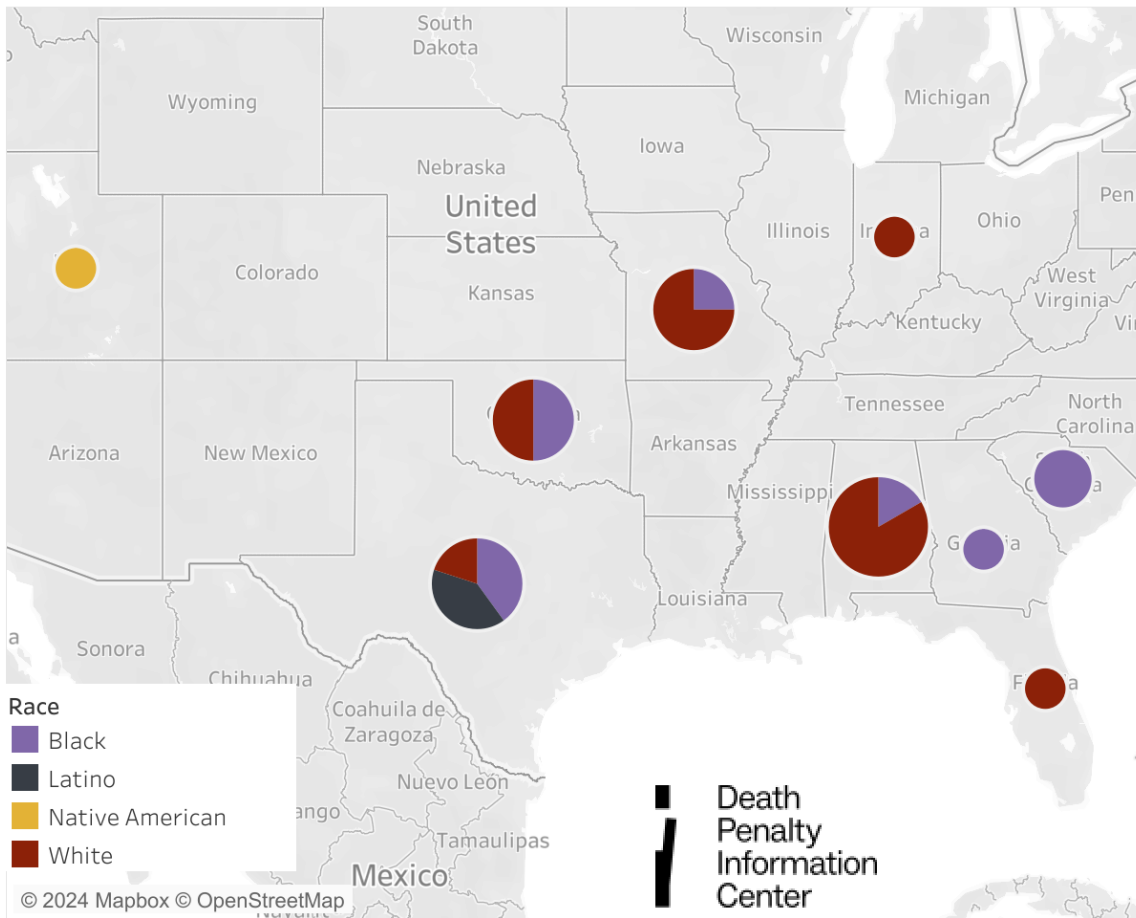
The ACLU [unsuccessfully challenged](#) another of South Carolina’s secrecy policies, banning prisoners from speaking to the media.



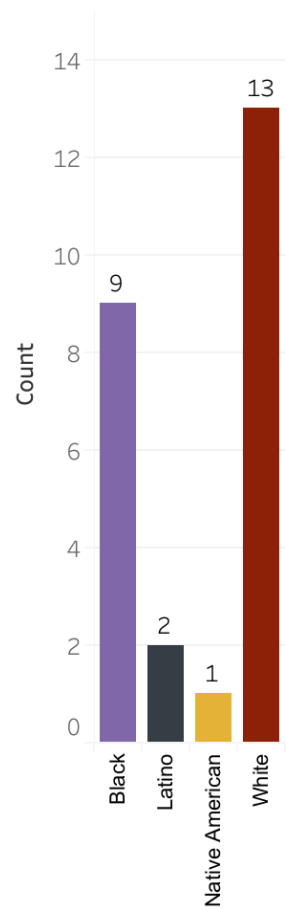
Khalil Allah
(formerly known as Freddie Owens)

South Carolina’s law requires prisoners to select their method of execution or accept the default method of electrocution in the state’s 110-year-old electric chair. Mr. Allah declined to choose, citing his Muslim faith, and authorized his attorney to choose for him.

Race of 2024 Executed Prisoners (25)



Total Nationwide



Race

Nearly half (48%) of the people executed in 2024 were people of color. Nine were Black, two were Latino, and one was Native American. The vast majority of defendants (80%) were executed for killing at least one white victim.

While six people of color were executed for murders of white victims, no white defendant was executed for the murder of a person of color. Throughout U.S. history, the death penalty has been more likely to be imposed in cases involving white victims, especially if the defendant is a person of color. Since 1976, more than ten times as many Black defendants have been executed for murders of white victims than white defendants executed for the murders of Black victims.

Age and Time on Death Row

Both the average age at execution (52 years) and the average time from sentencing to execution (22.2 years) remained close to last year's record highs of 54 years old and 23 years spent on death row.

The conditions of death row and lengthy solitary confinement contribute to declining physical and mental health for death-sentenced prisoners. Travis Mullis (TX), Derrick Dearman (AL), and Joseph Corcoran (IN) all waived appeals and "volunteered" for execution.

These men had long histories of mental illness which were exacerbated by the extreme conditions of isolation and deprivation on death row.

A [DPI analysis](#) found that the volunteer rate among death row prisoners is more than ten times the suicide rate among the general public. The execution of these three volunteers is responsible for the drop in average age and time on death row, compared to last year's numbers.

Lack of access to healthcare also exacerbates physical health conditions, as evidenced by Idaho's failed attempt to execute Thomas Creech in February.

His execution was called off after prison officials spent an hour trying to set an IV line.

Mr. Creech, who is 74 years old, has been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and edema, all of which impact circulation and vein quality.



Thomas Creech and wife LeAnn Creech Photo courtesy of attorney Jonah Horwitz.

Mr. Creech is the third person in the last three years to survive a botched lethal injection execution — Alabama tried and failed to execute Alan Miller and Kenneth Smith in 2022, then suffocated both men using nitrogen gas this year.

On October 15, Idaho [announced](#) that it had amended its execution protocol and facilities to allow staff to place a central intravenous line, if necessary, to carry out a lethal injection.

A new execution date of November 13 was set for Mr. Creech. One week before that date, a federal district judge issued a stay of execution to allow for the consideration of several new legal claims in Mr. Creech's case.

Despite having no executions in 12 years, the state of Idaho has spent over \$300,000 on renovations to its execution preparation room and intends to spend nearly \$1 million on a second phase of construction, which will include building a facility for firing squad executions.

Time on Death Row (in Months)

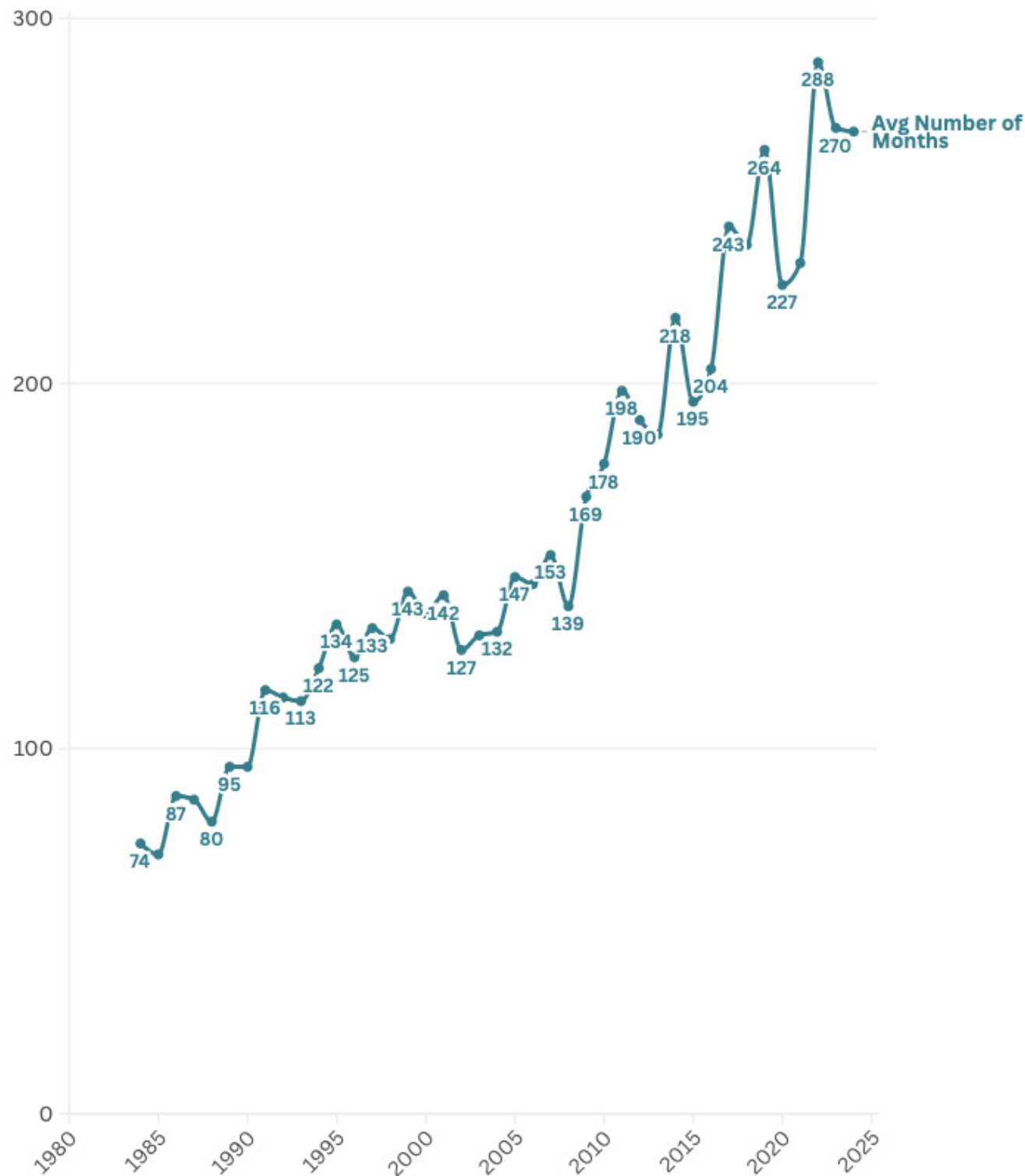


Table of Executions

The table below includes information about the people executed in 2024 and some of the legal issues in their trials and appeals. It is not intended to minimize the seriousness of any underlying crimes, but it is in keeping with the principle established in *Lockett v. Ohio* (1978) that “the fundamental respect for humanity underlying the Eighth Amendment [mandates the]...consideration of the character and record of the individual offender and the circumstances of the particular offense as a constitutionally indispensable part of the process of inflicting the penalty of death.”

Name	Execution Date	State	Race of Defendant	Victim Demographic	Description
Kenneth Smith	1/25/24	Alabama	White	1 White Female	Mr. Smith survived a botched lethal injection attempt in 2022. Witnesses reported that Mr. Smith “shook and writhed” during his execution by nitrogen hypoxia. He was the first person in the United States executed by that method.
Ivan Cantu	2/28/24	Texas	Latino	1 Latino Male, 1 White Female	Mr. Cantu maintained his innocence and unsuccessfully sought a hearing on new evidence, including the recantation of a key witness.
Willie Pye	3/20/24	Georgia	Black	1 Black Female	Mr. Pye presented evidence of his intellectual disability, which would exclude him from eligibility for the death penalty. He failed to meet Georgia’s uniquely high standard for proving intellectual disability and was also denied clemency.

Michael Smith	4/4/24	Oklahoma	Black	1 Asian Male, 1 Black Female	Mr. Smith argued at his clemency hearing that, if his trial counsel had properly represented him and introduced evidence of his intellectual disability, he likely would not be eligible for execution.
Brian Dorsey	4/9/24	Missouri	White	1 White Female, 1 White Male	Mr. Dorsey's clemency petition garnered widespread support from more than 70 corrections officials, a former Missouri Supreme Court Judge, multiple jurors, Democratic and Republican state legislators, and faith leaders. Correctional officers noted Mr. Dorsey's exemplary rehabilitation and years spent as a role model to other prisoners.
Jamie Mills	5/30/24	Alabama	White	1 White Female, 1 White Male	Mr. Mills was sentenced to death by a non-unanimous jury. Prosecutors lied to the jury, asserting that a key witness had not received anything for her testimony, when she in fact had received a lesser sentence in exchange for testifying.
David Hosier	6/11/24	Missouri	White	1 White Female, 1 White Male	Mr. Hosier's clemency petition emphasized his life-long struggles with depression after his father, a state trooper, was killed during Mr. Hosier's childhood.

Ramiro Gonzales	6/26/24	Texas	Latino	1 White Female, 1 White Male	Mr. Gonzales was just 18 years old at the time of his crime, and had experienced a childhood of sexual abuse, drug abuse, and mental illness.
Richard Rojem	6/27/24	Oklahoma	White	1 White Female	Mr. Rojem's jury never heard evidence that he was sexually abused as a child.
Keith Gavin	7/18/24	Alabama	Black	1 White Female	Mr. Gavin was sentenced by a non-unanimous jury. A federal district court found that his attorney was ineffective for failing to present any mitigating evidence, but a federal appeals court reversed that decision.
Arthur Burton	8/7/24	Texas	Black	1 White Female	Mr. Burton sought a stay to allow courts to consider evidence of his intellectual disability, which had never been considered using current clinical criteria.
Taberon Honie	8/8/24	Utah	Native American	1 Native American Female	Mr. Honie experienced significant trauma during his upbringing and was homeless and extremely intoxicated at the time of his crime.
Loran Cole	8/29/24	Florida	White	1 White Female	Mr. Cole was physically and sexually abused as a teenager at the state-run Dozier School.

Khalil Allah (aka Freddie Owens)	9/20/24	Oklahoma	Black	1 Black Female	Two days before Mr. Allah’s scheduled execution, his co-defendant recanted his trial testimony and said that Mr. Allah “was not present” during the crime. No court heard that evidence.
Marcellus “Khaliifah” Williams	9/24/24	Alabama	White	1 White Female	Mr. Williams was executed despite credible evidence of his innocence and over the objections of St. Louis District Attorney Wesley Bell and more than 1.5 million supporters who petitioned for clemency.
Travis Mullis	9/24/24	Texas	Black	1 White Male	Mr. Mullis was found competent to waive his appeals and “volunteer” for execution despite a lifetime of severe mental illness and suicide attempts, about which his jury did not meaningfully learn.
Emmanuel Littlejohn	9/26/24	Oklahoma	White	1 White Male	Oklahoma’s Pardon and Parole Board recommended clemency for Mr. Littlejohn due to his youth at the time of the crime, his history of childhood abuse, and his record of good behavior in prison.
Alan Miller	9/26/24	Alabama	White	3 White Males	Mr. Miller was sentenced to death by a non-unanimous jury. He survived a botched lethal injection in 2022 and was the second person ever executed by nitrogen hypoxia.

Garcia White	10/1/24	Texas	Black	2 Black Females	Mr. White became addicted to drugs after sustaining a serious workplace injury. Friends reported that drug use changed his personality, but rehabilitation during his incarceration “returned [him] to that sweet guy I knew before he was on drugs.”
Derrick Dearman	10/17/24	Alabama	White	2 White Females, 3 White Males	Mr. Dearman experienced severe depression and several other mental health conditions his entire life. He first told his mother he wanted to die when he was just four years old. He waived his appeals and “volunteered” for execution.
Richard Moore	11/1/24	South Carolina	Black	1 White Male	Mr. Moore’s request for clemency was supported by three jurors who had sentenced him to death at trial, a former director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, and the trial judge. Gov. Henry McMaster declined to grant clemency.
Carey Grayson	11/21/24	Alabama	White	1 White Female	Mr. Grayson was one of four teenagers charged with killing a hitchhiker. He was the oldest, at 19, but prosecutors told separate juries that each teenager on trial was the “ringleader.” The state of Alabama has since conceded that Mr. Grayson was less culpable than two of the other defendants, who did not receive death sentences.

Christopher Collings	12/3/24	Missouri	White	1 White Female	Mr. Collings experienced childhood neglect and sexual abuse. His attorneys argued on appeal that his co-defendant's account of the crime was irreconcilable with Mr. Collings' confession, supporting his contention that his confession was coerced by police.
Joseph Corcoran	12/18/24	Indiana	White	4 White Males	Mr. Corcoran was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. His attorneys argued that his delusions were so severe as to render his death sentence unconstitutional.
Kevin Underwood	12/19/24	Oklahoma	White	1 White Female	Mr. Underwood struggled with mental illness throughout his life. His severe depression, anxiety, and PTSD contributed to his social isolation and delusions prior to his crime.

All but one of the 25 individuals executed this year suffered from a vulnerability that would make them ineligible for the death penalty under current laws and norms. The individuals executed in 2024 spent on average more than 20 years on death row. On September 26, the United States reached the milestone of 1600 executions in the modern era.

Executions by State and Region

Alabama carried out the most executions in 2024, with six, followed by Texas with five, and Oklahoma and Missouri with four each. This marked the first year in which Alabama executed more people than any other state.

Three states resumed executions after long hiatuses. Utah's first execution in fourteen years occurred when it executed Taberon Dave Honie on August 8. South Carolina carried out two executions this year after a thirteen-year pause.

Indiana's first execution in fifteen years occurred on December 18, with Joseph Corcoran. Idaho attempted to resume executions after a twelve-year hiatus but had to call off the execution of 74-year-old Thomas Creech when executioners could not set an IV line after an hour of repeated attempts.

A second execution date for him this year was stayed by a district court pending the outcome of new legal challenges, which were subsequently dismissed by the Idaho Supreme Court.

In late November, Arizona announced that the state would resume executions in early 2025. Governor Katie Hobbs had requested a review of the state's execution process soon after taking office in 2023, but abruptly terminated the review headed by former U.S Magistrate Judge David Duncan, alleging that he had exceeded the scope of his mandate. Arizona Department of Corrections Director Ryan Thornell informed Governor Hobbs that the state was now prepared to use lethal injection.

Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes confirmed in a statement on November 26 that her office would be seeking a death warrant for prisoner Aaron Gunches in "the coming weeks."

Executions continued to be geographically concentrated in the South, with 19 of this year's executions (76%) carried out in southern states. Seven of the nine states that executed people this year rank among the top ten executing states in the modern era (Indiana and Utah do not).

Notably, only three of the states that executed people in 2024 also imposed new death sentences (Alabama, Florida, and Texas). New death sentences are a key indicator of the views and attitudes of jurors today, as opposed to executions, which reflect the views of jurors at the time of sentencing.

This distinction has become even more pronounced in recent years as executions increasingly represent views that are 20 or 30 years out of date, when support for the death penalty was higher and society had a different understanding of numerous factors that influence death sentences, including trauma, mental illness, and forensic evidence.

2024 Executions (25) by County

