



The Death Penalty Information Center 2019 Year End Report: Media Coverage Highlights

The Death Penalty Information Center's [2019 Year End Report](#) was released on December 17, 2019 and received extensive coverage in hundreds of print, online, television, and radio news outlets across the United States and around the world.

Coverage highlighted that 2019 marked the fifth consecutive year with fewer than 30 executions and 50 death sentences. Many media outlets noted that half of all U.S. states have abolished the death penalty or now prohibit executions. The report also emphasized that even as the number of death sentences and executions had dramatically fallen, that decline had not reduced the death penalty's discriminatory and arbitrary nature when it was applied. The report noted that rather than reserving executions and death sentences for the worst of the worst crimes and offenders, capital punishment was instead disproportionately meted out in 2019 in cases involving the most vulnerable defendants and prisoners and the least reliable judicial process.

An Associated Press story that was carried by over 250 outlets noted that “[t]wenty of the 22 executions in 2019 took place in five Southern states, led by Texas with 9.” That article also includes a compelling quote from Executive Director Robert Dunham: “The death penalty is disappearing from whole regions of the country and eroding in others, but the death penalty is persisting among outlier jurisdictions.” The Year End Report’s release was covered by the four largest wire services in the world: The Associated Press, Reuters, Agence-France Presse, and Agencia EFE.

NPR’s *Here and Now* — distributed across the United States by NPR to over 450 stations, with an estimated 4.5 million weekly listeners — featured a statement from Robert that “[o]f the 22 executions this year, 18 individuals showed evidence of serious mental illness, brain damage or chronic exposure to trauma... And some of them were ages 18 to 21 at the time of the crime.” The Washington Post’s editorial board tracked the facts in the report closely and concluded: “The death penalty is expensive, unfairly implemented and unworthy of a justice system that strives for equal application of the law. Yet even if it could be applied fairly, state-sponsored killing would be unworthy of a nation founded on the principle of individual dignity.” USA Today led with “Death sentences and executions remained at near-historic lows this year while calls for exoneration gripped the nation, according to a new report released Tuesday.”

As issues of innocence remained at the forefront of national capital punishment practices, many outlets reported that 2019 was almost the year of “executing the innocent”— a line taken directly from Robert’s quote in [DPIC’s press release](#) about the report. For example, the Guardian’s article about the report was titled “Capital punishment: 2019 was nearly ‘the year of executing the innocent.’” In an interview with USA Today, Robert said, “We’ve gotten to the point where Americans accept as a fact that the death penalty risks wrongly convicting and potentially executing people who are innocent...This year dramatically illustrates that issue.”

Robert also offered extensive interviews to reporters working locally, many of whom focused on the geographic narrowing of the death penalty. California Matters wrote, “There were 22 executions nationally in 2019, all but one of which was in a Southern state. It was the second fewest since 1991, the Death Penalty Information Center reports.” The three death sentences in Cuyahoga County — the highest number of death sentences for a county in 2019 — received

notable attention, with at least two original news stories quoting Robert and a third citing the report.

A selection of coverage follows. Click on the headline to access each source.

* Stories that included an interview with Robert

** Stories that quoted Robert’s statement from the press release

PRINT & ONLINE MEDIA COVERAGE

TOP TIER PRINT & ONLINE MEDIA (in alphabetical order)

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Associated Press	Report: 5th straight year with under 30 executions in US*	Dec. 17
<i>Above story carried by US News and World Report , CBS News, ABC News, TIME Magazine, San Francisco Chronicle, and various local outlets</i>		
CNN	Use of death penalty in US this year was 'near historic lows,' report says**	Dec. 17
The Guardian	Capital punishment: 2019 was nearly 'the year of executing the innocent'**	Dec. 17
The Guardian	US Morning Briefing (US briefing: impeachment fight, North Korea and capital punishment)**	Dec. 17
New York Times	6 Figures That Tell the Story of the Death Penalty in America	Dec. 17
Reuters	Number of U.S. executions and support for capital punishment decline in 2019: report finds**	Dec. 17
<i>Above story carried by, Yahoo! News, Yahoo World, Microsoft News, New Hampshire Union Leader, The Advertiser (Australia), and various local outlets</i>		
United Press International	U.S. executions near 'historic' low, reflect 20-year trend, report says**	Dec. 17

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
USA Today	Death penalty on the decline: There will be fewer than 30 executions for the 5th straight year, a new report says*	Dec. 17
<i>Above story carried by Yahoo! News and various local outlets</i>		
Wall Street Journal	Use of Death Penalty in U.S. Continues to Wane*	Dec. 17
Washington Post	Despite Trump's vow to revive the death penalty, support for capital punishment shrank in 2019*	Dec. 17
<i>Above story carried by various local outlets</i>		
Washington Post	Editorial: The death penalty is unworthy of America	Jan. 1
Yahoo! News	Capital punishment: 2019 was nearly 'the year of executing the innocent' (from The Guardian)	Dec. 17

SPECIALTY COVERAGE

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
ABA Journal	Use of death penalty remains 'near historic lows,' while public support wanes**	Dec. 17
Catholic News Agency	Drop in support for the death penalty matches decline in its use	Dec. 19
Catholic News Service	New report shows decreased use of death penalty in U.S.**	Dec. 18
Crime Report	Capital Punishment Continues to 'Wither' Across the U.S.: Report**	Dec. 17
Crux Catholic Media	Death penalty continues to decline in the U.S. according to new report*	Dec. 17
Equal Justice Initiative	Death Penalty Decline Continued in 2019	Dec. 29
The Epoch Times	Death Penalties Decline: California Imposes Moratorium and New Hampshire Abolishes	Dec.17
Marshall Project	Opening Statement, Report of the Day	Dec. 14
National Catholic Reporter	New report shows decreased use of death penalty in U.S.	Dec. 18
ProCon.org	Death Penalty in Decline	Dec. 30
Route 50	Death Penalty Used by an Increasingly Small Number of States	Dec. 17

LOCAL AND REGIONAL COVERAGE

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Alabama.com (AL)	Alabama among national leaders in carrying out death penalty	Dec. 17
Associated Press (OH)	Study: Ohio county leads country in recent death sentences	Dec. 17

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Burlington County Times (NJ)	Matthew T. Mangino: A year-end review of the death penalty	Dec. 20
CBS Miami (FL)	Report: U.S. Death Penalty Cases Declining, But Florida Among Most Active Capital Punishment States	Dec. 17
California Matters (CA)	What Matters Newsletter (PG&E gets a win, Newsom isn't satisfied, taxing weed, and a murderer dies on death row)	Dec. 18
Cleveland.com (OH)	The Flyover (Ohio, Pennsylvania are the only Flyover states that handed out death sentences in 2019: The Flyover)	Dec. 18
Cleveland.com (OH)	Cuyahoga County leads the nation in death-penalty sentences, study finds*	Dec. 17
Columbus Dispatch (OH)	Ohio saw no 2019 executions, but one county leads nation in recent death convictions*	Dec. 17
Columbus Dispatch (OH)	Column: Victim's son questions the county leading US in death sentences	Dec. 28
Dayton Daily News (OH)	Report: Capital punishment continues to decline across U.S.	Dec. 17
Missourian (MO)	Is capital punishment on the way out?	Dec. 21
News-Sentinel (IN)	Editorial: Continual decline in executions makes death penalty ineffective as deterrent *	Dec. 30

INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Agence France-Presse [^]	Death penalty usage declined in US in 2019: group**	Dec. 18
Agencia EFE ^{^^}	Menos ejecuciones y menos condenas a muerte en Estados Unidos en 2019*	Dec. 17
DomRadio (Germany)	Unterstützung für die Todesstrafe in den USA nimmt ab: Sorge vor Hinrichtung Unschuldiger*	Jan. 8
Gazeta News	Pena de morte continuou em baixa em 2019 nos EUA, diz relatório	Dec. 20
London Daily Mail (UK)	Number of prisoners executed in US drops for fifth consecutive year to 22 amid tumbling support for death penalty	Dec. 17
News Malta (Malta)	Il-piena tal-mewt fl-Istati Uniti qed tkompli tonqos	Dec. 26

[^] 3rd largest international wire service

^{^^} 4th largest international wire service

TELEVISION & RADIO

TELEVISION & RADIO OUTLETS

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Newsy	Report: Death penalty keeps declining in U.S.*	Dec. 17
NPR	Here & Now (Death Penalty Decline Continued In 2019)*	Dec. 17

SOURCE	TITLE	DATE
Sirius XM Radio	POTUS Morning Briefing*	Dec. 18
Indiana Public Media	Decade Passes Since Indiana Executes An Inmate*	Dec. 26
Indiana Public Radio	All IN Indiana (The Death Penalty)*	Jan. 8
Public News Service	Report: U.S. Support for Death Penalty Wanes to Historic Low*	Dec. 23
Wisconsin Public Radio (NPR)	The State of Capital Punishment in the US*	Dec. 19