

# The Push for Death Penalty Repeal in Ohio



The death penalty is an expensive, ineffective, racist, and arbitrary system that puts innocent lives at risk. Currently, 23 states, plus Washington, D.C., have cut ties with the death penalty; Ohio can and should be next.

At the Ohio Statehouse, a bipartisan team of lawmakers has introduced legislation to abolish the death penalty in Ohio once and for all. Senate Bill 103 and House Bill 183 are identical, companion bills that would repeal Ohio's death penalty.

## SB 103 and HB 183 At A Glance

### SB 103

**What does this bill do?** Senate Bill 103 will abolish the death penalty in Ohio. The bill removes the possibility of a sentence of death for those who have not yet been convicted.

**Sponsors:** Senators Steve Huffman (R) & Nickie Antonio (D)

**Co-Sponsors:** Senators Niraj Antani (R), Hearcel Craig (D), Tina Maharath (D), Kristina Roegner (R), Michael A. Rulli (R), Vernon Sykes (D), Cecil Thomas (D), Sandra R. Williams (D), Kenny Yuko (D)

**Introduced:** March 2, 2021

**Committee:** Senate Judiciary Committee



### HB 183

**What does this bill do?** House Bill 183 will abolish the death penalty in Ohio. The bill removes the possibility of a sentence of death for those who have not yet been convicted.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Jean Schmidt (R) & Adam Miller (D)

**Co-Sponsors:** Representatives Willis E. Blackshear, Jr. (D), Juanita O. Brent (D), Jamie Callender (R), Erica C. Crawley (D), Sedrick Denson (D), Ron Ferguson (R), Tavia Galonski (D), Catherine D. Ingram (D), Brigid Kelly (D), Laura Lanese (R), Mary Lightbody (D), Beth Liston (D), Joseph A. Miller III (D), Tracy M. Richardson (R), Craig S. Riedel (R), C. Allison Russo (D), Kent Smith (D), Lisa A. Sobecki (D), Bride Rose Sweeney (D), Terrence Upchurch (D), Casey Weinstein (D), Thomas West (D), Andrea White (R)

**Introduced:** March 4, 2021

**Committee:** House Criminal Justice Committee

## Ohio – By the Numbers

- 134 people on Ohio's death row as of May 2021.
- 56 people executed since 1999.
- Ohio has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest death row rate in the country and is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest executing state.



## Why Ohio Needs to Abolish the Death Penalty

- **The death penalty puts innocent lives at risk.** Since 1973, more than 185 death row inmates have been exonerated of all charges and released.
  - Ohio is home to 11 death row exonerees who collectively spent 216 years incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. For every five people Ohio has executed, one has been exonerated from death row.
- **The death penalty is arbitrarily applied based on race and geography.**
  - Ohio's death penalty system is continually used in just ten of 88 counties.
  - As of Fall 2020, more than half (56%) of Ohio's death row are people of color, even though they make up a very small fraction (15%) of Ohio's population.
- **The death penalty is horribly expensive.** The death penalty is at least three times more expensive than other sentencing options. Death penalty trials cost Ohio taxpayers as much as \$16 million per case.
- **The death penalty is ineffective and wasteful.** There is no reliable evidence that the system delivers on anything that it intends to do. The death penalty does not enhance public safety nor help victims and their family members heal. By ending the death penalty, Ohio could divert funds to services for victims and their families, as well as fund crime prevention programs.

**Repealing the death penalty is supported by a significant majority of Ohioans.** A statewide public opinion poll found that 59% of those surveyed support replacing the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole. Death penalty repeal is a bipartisan issue, with 69% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans in support of repeal. **Whether it's due to racial disparity, fiscal, or innocence concerns, Ohioans agree that it is time to put an end to this broken system.**

## Now is the time

The momentum for death penalty repeal in Ohio has been growing. Ohio's last execution took place in July 2018. With terribly botched executions and an inability to obtain lethal injection drugs, all scheduled executions since have been on hold. House Bill 136 – which exempts individuals with serious mental illness from receiving a death sentence – was signed into law by Governor DeWine in January 2021. This important piece of legislation ignited conversations about Ohio's criminal legal system and the need for equitable, effective reform.

Public opinion in favor of repeal has never been higher. At the Statehouse, there is unprecedented bipartisan support. Ohio doesn't want or need the death penalty. SB 103 and HB 183 can end the death penalty in Ohio once and for all.



Learn more about the campaign to end Ohio's death penalty at [NoDeathPenaltyOH.com](https://NoDeathPenaltyOH.com).

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JUSTICE  
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