



WILL CALIFORNIA BANISH THE DEATH PENALTY?

A ballot initiative in California, Proposition 34, gives voters the chance to abolish capital punishment in the state. Initiatives are generally a bad way to make law, but a vote by the people is the only way to overturn the death penalty in California because that was how it was adopted in 1978.

Statewide polls about the measure have moved favorably toward repeal of the penalty in the past few months, but it is one of the important choices on Tuesday that remains too close to call. We encourage every California voter to support the initiative.

It would shift more than 725 inmates from death row to life in prison without the possibility of parole, and it would reduce by almost one-quarter the number of inmates in the United States waiting to be executed.

Passage of the initiative would end a capital punishment system that is almost certainly unconstitutional on the most fundamental basis: many who have received the state death sentence do not rank as the worst of the worst among convicted criminals. California clearly imposes the sentence in ways far broader than the "narrow category of the most serious crimes" that the Supreme Court has said is allowed by the Constitution.

The state penalty is likely unconstitutional for other reasons, too. For example, excessive delays in appointing counsel for appeals and in holding state appeals hearings make the wait for resolution, often in solitary confinement, cruel and inhumane.

The measure's passage, according to the state's legislative analyst, would save the state more than \$100 million a year in the first few years and then \$130 million a year after that. The savings would come from putting an end to long death penalty trials that require spending on extra lawyers, investigators and experts for both the prosecution and the defense; protracted mandatory appeals that take a decade or more even for those wrongly convicted; and special prison housing that triples the normal costs.

The initiative would require that convicted murderers work in prison and put their earnings in a fund for victims' families. It would improve public safety by committing \$100 million of the expected savings to



the investigation of the state's high percentage of unsolved rapes (56 percent) and murders (46 percent). California has executed 13 men out of the more than 800 people sentenced to death since the state adopted the penalty by initiative in 1978 (84 inmates on death row have died without being executed). A 2011 study led by Arthur L. Alarcón, a senior judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, found that the state system has cost \$4 billion — \$308 million per execution. Judge Alarcón, who was a pro-death penalty prosecutor, now opposes the penalty as a costly and "complete failure." Proposition 34 is backed by federal, state and local government officials, including many in law enforcement and corrections. It's time to shut down the state's immoral, barbaric and broken system of capital punishment.

The New York Times, November 6, 2012





Overview

1. What type of document is it?
2. What is the main topic?

Focus

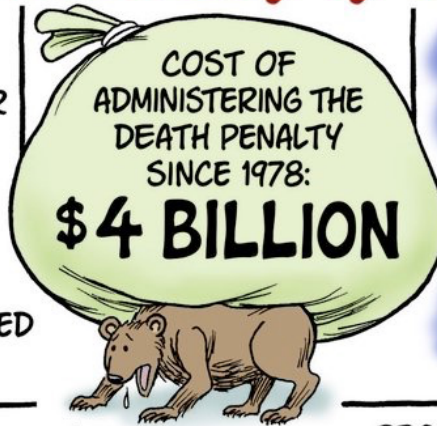
1. What is Proposition 34?
 - explain the purpose
2. How many inmates are on death row on California?
 - What would change for them?
3. How much has death penalty cost to California since 1978?
 - Explain the reason.
4. What is California going to do with the savings from death penalty abolition?
 - Explain where these savings come from.
 - Give the two principal measures.
5. How many executions has California made since 1978?
6. What is the journalist's conclusion?



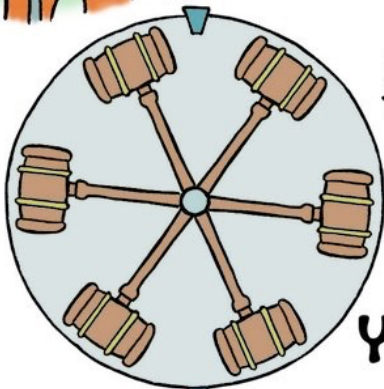
California's Death Penalty by the Numbers



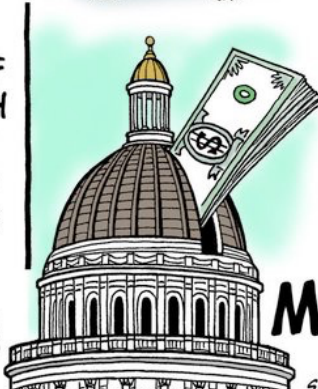
84 INMATES DIED OF OLD AGE OR OTHER CAUSES BEFORE THEY COULD BE EXECUTED, WHILE ONLY **13** WERE ACTUALLY EXECUTED SINCE 1978.



THE CHANCES OF YOUR BEING KILLED BY LIGHTNING ARE NEARLY THE SAME AS A MURDERER BEING KILLED BY LETHAL INJECTION IN CALIFORNIA.



AVERAGE LENGTH OF THE DEATH PENALTY APPEALS PROCESS:
25 YEARS



PROJECTED ANNUAL SAVINGS IF THE DEATH PENALTY WAS ENDED:
\$130 MILLION

34
THE PROPOSITION THAT WILL END ALL THIS INSANITY.