

# OHIOANS TO STOP EXECUTIONS

**Dozens of comprehensive studies have been done about the cost of the death penalty, and each one has shown that the death penalty far exceeds the cost of a life without the possibility of parole sentence. But where do these costs come from?**

**LEGAL COSTS:** Almost all people who face the death penalty cannot afford their own attorney. The state must assign public defenders or court-appointed lawyers to represent them and pay for the costs of the prosecution as well.

**PRE-TRIAL COSTS:** Capital cases are far more complicated than non-capital cases and take longer to go to trial. Experts will be needed on forensic evidence, mental health, and the background and history of the defendant. County taxpayers pick up the costs of added security and longer pre-trial detention.

**JURY SELECTION:** Because of the need to question jurors thoroughly on their views about the death penalty, jury selection in capital cases is much more time consuming and expensive.

**TRIAL:** Death-penalty trials can last more than four times longer than non-capital trials, requiring juror and attorney compensation, in addition to court personnel and other related costs.

**INCARCERATION:** Most death rows involve solitary confinement in a special facility. These require more security and other accommodations as the prisoners are kept for 23 hours a day in their cells.

**APPEALS:** Multiple layers of review are required for people sentenced to death. The costs of these mandated appeals are borne at taxpayers' expense. These appeals are necessary as at least 185 individuals have been exonerated from death rows, some within hours of execution before evidence was uncovered proving their innocence.

Nationally, the death penalty costs taxpayers an average of \$1 million than a life without parole sentence, making it the most expensive part of our criminal justice system on a per offender basis. In one of the most comprehensive studies, the Urban Institute looked at the cost of Maryland's death penalty in 2008 and found the average cost per case — including investigation, trial, appeals and incarceration — was \$3 million, compared to \$1.1 million for a capital-eligible case where prosecutors didn't seek the death penalty.

Ohio has 138 people on Death Row. If each inmate cost the state \$3 million during their lifetimes, the total cost would be \$414 million.

The Akron Beacon Journal, in 2017, compared expenses between a death penalty case and a non-death penalty case.

The reporting on Summit County costs are incomplete and do not account for all the additional costs of capital cases. Even so, the figures reveal that death penalty cases cost in excess of ten times the amount of non-death penalty cases.

Applying the Akron Beacon Journal cost analysis to recent Summit County cases and we can see the tremendous burden the death penalty had in this county.

**Death penalty needed for 'worst of the worst,' chief counsel for Summit County prosecutor says**

**Expense comparison of two Summit County Aggravated murder cases**

Eric Hendon expenses* (death penalty)		Deandre Baskerville expenses (not death penalty)	
Attorney fees (first)	\$24,599	Attorney fees (first)	\$11,580
Attorney fees (second)	\$98,343		
Transcript fees	\$30,157	Transcript fees	\$3,610
Expert fees	\$97,491	Investigatory fees	\$2,500
Jury summons	\$3,472	Jury summons	\$19
Jury parking	\$3,770	Jury parking	\$368
Jury bus passes	\$43	Jury view transportati	\$268
Chair rental for voir dire	\$544	Extradition	\$1,040
Juror fees	\$1,275		
Juror lodging (1 night)	\$1,591		
Juror meals/snacks	\$3,668		
Sheriff overtime (securit	\$2,922		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$267,875</b>		<b>\$19,365</b>

*Note: \*Rounded to the nearest dollar.*  
 SOURCE: Summit County Common Pleas Court  
 Akron Beacon Journal

## PIKE COUNTY

Pike County's total budget is \$10 million / year. The high profile Rhoden family murder trial is expected to surpass \$4 million, almost half of their county's budget. The county has been forced to seek aid from the state budget to help cover these outrageous costs solely for the trial.

The Dayton Daily News did an in-depth study in 2014 on the cost of the death penalty in 2014. Here's what they found:

- It costs taxpayers atleast \$17 million annually to keep Ohio's death penalty, and that number is a fraction of the total cost: county prosecutors, the courts, and the state prison system do not specifically track expenses associated with death penalty cases. These expenses, which would surely total millions, weren't included in their \$17 million annual price tag.

### **Here's a further breakdown:**

- \$842,000 a year for seven attorneys and two paralegals in the Ohio Attorney General's capital crimes unit;
- \$1.35 million a year for 14 attorneys and four other staff in the Ohio Public Defender's death penalty division;
- \$2.5 million a year paid to appointed defense attorneys to represent indigent Ohioans in capital cases;
- \$3.88 million budgeted for public defender attorneys on capital cases in federal court;
- \$8.3 million in prison costs for 138 Death Row inmates, though the actual figure is likely higher since they are held in single cells and under tight security protocol.

With all these millions spent on Ohio's death penalty, what is our return on investment? The death penalty does not deter violent crime or help law enforcement more effectively solve crime. As of 2/5/20, there are 2,138 unsolved homicides in Ohio. That's 2,138 victims' families left without answers. There are 478, 714, and 41 unsolved homicides in Hamilton, Franklin, and Cuyahoga county, respectively. These three counties represent nearly 58% of the total unsolved homicides in an 88 county state. These counties are also known for their aggressive use of the death penalty. Can you imagine if all the resources spent on death cases were instead directed to solving these crimes?

Despite the millions wasted on this system, we also know that we get the wrong person far too often. In Ohio, 11 death row exonerees gave up a combined 216 years of their life for crimes they did not commit.

Instead of spending millions on cherry-picked capital cases, we should ensure Ohio is providing for all those left behind in the wake of violence. A recent article found that, of the 313 homicides in 2018, only 3.23% of victim family members received financial assistance from the state. Ohio ranks 46th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of providing help to murder victim family members.

This expensive system does not provide Ohioans with a return on investment, deter violent crime, or provide the justice and healing it claims to do for murder victim family members. It's time to repeal the death penalty and reallocate the millions spent on it toward meaningful reforms.