

South West Montana YMCA

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Montana Association to abolish Capital Punishment

As a Montana citizen I stand to abolish capital punishment. Capital punishment is a very primitive form of punishment that does not work in today's civilized society. There is a better more efficient way to solve our crime problem than with anger and violence.

Not only is capital punishment dangerous, it is also very costly; the money to support capital punishment raises our taxes. On average the death penalty costs 9.1 million dollars more than life without parole. The Montana State prison in Deer Lodge has no financial records in compliance with executions in Montana. Using a national survey I have learned that states have to pay the executioner and the undertaker at least \$800 dollars each per execution. In addition, prisons have to pay for any travel expenses of the family, the last meal, and a new suit for the inmate burial. Abolishing capital punishment would put more money into correctional facilities.

The 8<sup>th</sup> amendment states that "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." The victims on death row are no exception. Our 14<sup>th</sup> amendment section one states that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Montana should not be allowed to break the Constitution.

Montana allows hanging for inmates who have been on death row since before the law was passed to abolish hanging. Montana's main form of execution is lethal injection. Here's how it works. After the prisoner has been restrained, two intravenous (IV) tubes are inserted by the execution team, one tube in each arm. The intravenous tubes are threaded through an opening in the wall that leads to the anteroom, where the executioner is located. Once the IV tubes are inserted, a saline solution begins flowing into them. This is a costly process and very dangerous to all those watching and potentially life altering for the witnesses.

The appeals process in Montana is lengthy and expensive. The first part is general provisions, in which the defendant is allowed to present his case in front of a general court. Then it moves to state court where it is reviewed; if the appeal is taken, then a sentence is given. If not, then it is moved to the Supreme Court where it goes through several trials. A death row victim is allowed nine different appeal processes. Appeals are what make the death penalty so expensive, and there is a nine to ten turnover rate. We need change, and it is well within the power of existing governments to provide means whereby murderers, as well as other criminals, can be isolated in institutions where they can be humanely treated but kept from hurting anyone ever again.