

A Broken System: Error Rates in Capital Cases

State Report Card

ARIZONA, 1974-1995

History

First Death Sentence	1974
First Direct Appeal	1975
First Consensual Execution	1993
First Non-Consensual Execution	1992

Sentences and Executions

Total Number of Death Sentences	247
Total Number of Executions	4
Percentage of Death Sentences Carried Out	2%

Error Rates

State Direct Appeal

Number Reviewed on Direct Appeal	197
Number Reversed on Direct Appeal	82
Percentage Reversed on Direct Appeal	42%
Number Awaiting Direct Appeal	50
Percentage Awaiting Direct Appeal	20%
Number Forward to State Post-Conviction	115

State Post-Conviction

Number Reviewed on Post-Conviction	Unknown
Number Reversed on Post-Conviction	12
Percentage Reversed on Post-Conviction	10%
Number Forward to Federal Habeas Corpus	Unknown

State Direct Appeal and State Post-Conviction Combined

Overall Rate of Error Found by State Courts	48%
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Federal Habeas Corpus

Number Reviewed on Habeas Corpus	15
Number Reversed on Habeas Corpus	9
Percentage Reversed on Habeas Corpus	60%

Overall Rates Including [and Excluding] State Post-Conviction

Overall Error Rate	79% [77%]
Overall Success Rate	21% [23%]

Timing

Time From First Death Sentence to First Non-Consensual Execution	18.00
Average Time from Sentence to Execution	16.00
Average Time from Sentence to Final Federal Relief	9.00

Sentencing and Execution Rates

Death Sentences per 1000 Homicides	40.98
Death Sentences per 100,000 Population	7.82
Death Sentences per 1000 Prison Population	25.29
Non-Consensual Executions per 1000 Homicides	0.50
Non-Consensual Executions per 100,000 Population	0.09
Non-Consensual Executions per 1000 Prison Population	0.31

Demographic Information

Average Population	3,068,591
Average Homicides	262
Average Homicides/ Average Population	8.54
Average Prison Admissions	3,540
Average Prison Population	9,769
Percentage Population Non-White	17%

Court Factors

Political Pressure (judicial elections)	7
Party Competition (gubernatorial elections)	1
State Court Criminal Caseload per 1000 Population	36.69
Expenditures per Capita on Courts	57.76

Sources: DRCen; Death Row U.S.A., Winter 2000; DADB; HCDB; Appendix C; USCen; UCRDB; USCen; PrisCen; PolPres; CtCaLd; CtExpen