

A Broken System: Error Rates in Capital Cases

State Report Card

TENNESSEE, 1977-1995

History

First Death Sentence	1977
First Direct Appeal	1979
First Consensual Execution	NONE
First Non-Consensual Execution	2000

Sentences and Executions

Total Number of Death Sentences	141
Total Number of Executions	0
Percentage of Death Sentences Carried Out	0%

Error Rates

State Direct Appeal

Number Reviewed on Direct Appeal	109
Number Reversed on Direct Appeal	32
Percentage Reversed on Direct Appeal	29%
Number Awaiting Direct Appeal	32
Percentage Awaiting Direct Appeal	23%
Number Forward to State Post-Conviction	77

State Post-Conviction

Number Reviewed on Post-Conviction	Unknown
Number Reversed on Post-Conviction	13
Percentage Reversed on Post-Conviction	17%
Number Forward to Federal Habeas Corpus	Unknown

State Direct Appeal and State Post-Conviction Combined

Overall Rate of Error Found by State Courts	41%
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Federal Habeas Corpus

Number Reviewed on Habeas Corpus	1
Number Reversed on Habeas Corpus	1
Percentage Reversed on Habeas Corpus	100%

Overall Rates Including [and Excluding] State Post-Conviction

Overall Error Rate	100% [100%]
Overall Success Rate	0% [0%]

Time

Time From First Death Sentence to First Non-Consensual Execution	23
Average Time from Sentence to Execution	N/A
Average Time from Sentence to Final Federal Relief	17

Sentencing and Execution Rates

Death Sentences per 1000 Homicides	14.39
Death Sentences per 100,000 Population	2.98
Death Sentences per 1000 Prison Population	16.18
Non-Consensual Executions per 1000 Homicides	0.00
Non-Consensual Executions per 100,000 Population	0.00
Non-Consensual Executions per 1000 Prison Population	0.00

Demographic Information

Average Population	4,676,729
Average Homicides	474
Average Homicide Rate per 100,000 Population	10.13
Average Prison Admissions	3,086
Average Prison Population	8,716
Percentage Population Non-White	17%

Court Factors

Political Pressure (judicial elections)	6
Party Competition (gubernatorial elections)	0
State Court Criminal Caseload per 1000 Population	16.51
Expenditures per Capita on Courts	26.92

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