

Terry Lenamon on the Death Penalty

Sidebar with a Board Certified Expert Criminal Trial Attorney



Terence M. Lenamon is a Florida Bar certified expert in the area of criminal trial law. With over 17 years experience he has built a reputation as one of Florida's most respected criminal defense lawyers. His defense has been sought by many high-profile clients and has led him through 20 first-degree murder trials and eight death penalty cases. That experience has brought him national recognition as a go-to commentator on death penalty issues. He is the force behind both deathpenaltyblog.com and Florida Capital Resource Center (floridacapitalresourcecenter.org), and can be reached at terry@lenamonlaw.com.

California Could Save \$1 Billion By Abolishing the Death Penalty. How Bad Will It Get B4 They Do?

Posted on April 20, 2010 by [Terry Lenamon](#)

The [ACLU of Northern California](#) released a study that got lots of attention last year, in no small part due to the practicalities it addresses. (The study is entitled [Death in Decline'09](#), and is available for download.)

For example, the study opines that California could save itself One Billion Dollars (\$1,000,000,000.00) over a five year period, just by taking capital punishment off the table in pending prosecutions and commuting existing death sentences to life without parole.

2010: Los Angeles Isn't Investigating Homicide Cases Because Police Department Is Broke

This week, the Death Penalty Info Center discussed the recent HOLD placed on homicide investigations in Los Angeles - because of budget constraints. That's right: the cops were told to stop work on murder cases because of a lack of money. They're even sending homicide detectives off on vacation, to cut back on overtime.

[DPIC quotes sources](#) as stating that in March 2010, these budget cutbacks were equivalent to cutting 290 cops from the LA police force.

Sounds like a movie, doesn't it? Like some futurist action film where the criminals run free? Except this isn't fantasy, and it's all about the bottom line. California is cutting services all over the place.

How Bad Must It Get Before California Abolishes Capital Punishment as a Budget Cut?

So, here's the question: why is California letting homicides go without investigation, as well as selling public lands and doing other shocking budget cuts (as if the homicide holds weren't shocking enough), and still not addressing capital punishment?

The [New York Times is reporting](#) that California devotes around 11% of its annual budget -- which tallies to approximately \$8 billion/year, to the state penal system. Looking at that cost outlay, California is implementing a program to release a whole lotta folk -- around 6500 “low-level offenders” will be freed and not required to have much contact with parole officials.

They’re reported to be drug offenders and the like - those that aren’t as threatening to the citizenry as the more violent inmates might be. To give you an idea of how many people are going to be released, it’s akin to the [ENTIRE prison population](#) of some states (e.g., Utah, New Mexico, etc.)

One wonders what Governor Schwarzenegger is thinking.

1. California is letting its drug addicts out of prison, without supervision.
2. California has put a halt to cops investigating murders in Los Angeles, of all places.
3. But California hasn’t put a stop to the death penalty -- when that single action would cut be like saving almost of one entire year’s outlay for the state penal system....

With an [exploding budget deficit](#), our watch of California’s treatment of the death penalty continues....