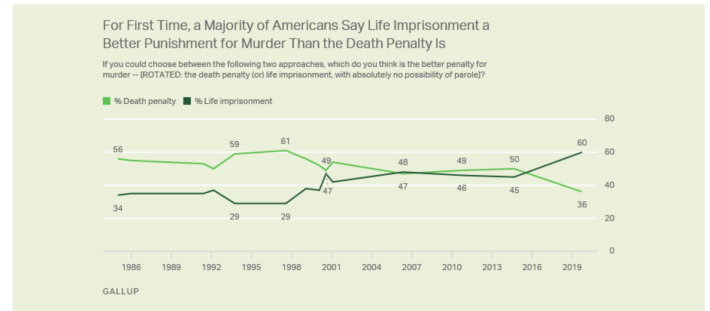


Support for the Death Penalty Weak in Kansas and Nationally

Americans Prefer Life Over the Death Penalty

In 2019, Americans for the first time chose the alternative of life in prison rather than the death penalty as “the better punishment” for murder. In 2014, the same question only had 45% support for life in prison. On this question, there were increases in support for life in prison among Republicans, Democrats and Independents.



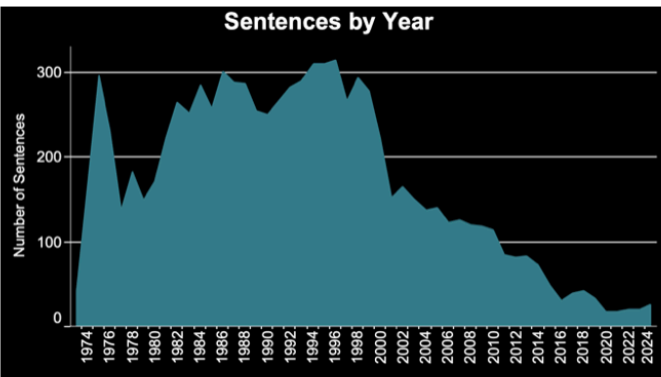
Death Sentences Down: Declining Support from Juries and Prosecutors

The death penalty is also falling out of favor with US juries and prosecutors, as there has been a sharp decline in the number of death sentences handed down. 2024 marks the 10th year in a row with less than fifty new death sentences.

Death Sentence peak in 1996: 315
 Death sentences in 2024: 26

Since 2016 there have been no new death sentences in Kansas.

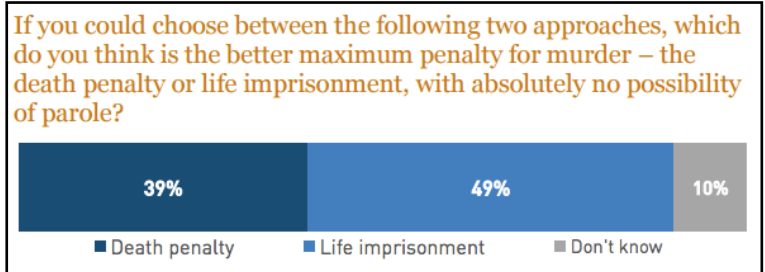
The same trend exists with regard to executions. In 2024 there were 25 executions. This was the 10th year in a row where executions were less than 30, compared to a single year high of 98 in 1999.



Graphic courtesy of Death Penalty Information (DPI)

Kansans Choose Life over Death

In a 2016 Fort Hays State University poll on criminal justice issues, Kansans supported life without parole over the death penalty by a ten point margin with 49% of Kansans choosing life without parole as the maximum sentence to murder, and just 39% choosing the death penalty.



Kansans are Ready for Change

The 2016 Fort Hays State University poll finds strong public support for improving our criminal justice system across all demographic and political groups. A full 93% of Kansans say it is somewhat or very important to make changes to the criminal justice system in Kansas.