

THE TRIBAL TRIBUNE

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Four hundred and eighty. The number of days since the Emanuel Nine shooting.

In those days, there have been tears. There have been prayers. There has been healing, rebuilding, and now, there will be justice.

Dylann Roof, the 22-year-old shooter, begins his trial this month. Roof faces 33 counts of federal offenses, and with the stakes this high, the decision that faces the jury is no longer one of guilt versus innocence, but rather a life in prison versus capital punishment.

And the decision this jury will face is one that is increasingly debated among Americans today, and more and more people are asking the question: Should we still enact the death penalty?

In an eight to five vote, the *Tribal Tribune* editorial staff voted that the death penalty should be outlawed in the United States.

Although the vote was close, the rationale for those who voted against the penalty came down to two driving reasons: cost and morality.

As far as cost goes, the general assumption

is that keeping someone alive in prison would cost more than putting someone on death row and eventually executing them. But this assumption is entirely wrong.

On average, it costs taxpayers about \$90,000 more per death row inmate than regular inmates, according to deathpenaltyinfo.org. This is due to the fact that death row inmates are held on death row for just as long, if not longer than, regular inmates, and at much higher and more expensive security standards, which adds up -- a lot.

Then there's the cost of the actual execution, which isn't cheap either.

One dosage of a lethal injection, used in most death penalty cases, costs roughly \$100, but that's a price that is only going up. The U.S. is the only western nation that still has -- and uses -- capital punishment, so few pharmaceutical companies outside the U.S. borders will make the drugs, and even less inside the borders. It's simple supply and demand -- the scarcer the resources, the higher the cost, and it's a cost that falls on the taxpayer.

The U.S. is the the ONLY western nation

that still maintains the death penalty. Other countries that use capital punishment include China, Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia; a short list that we are on.

How can we expect to maintain the U.S.'s position as a world superpower and a paradigm of progress if we still conduct a form of punishment that is viewed as brutal, primitive and cruel by the our allies?

Which brings morality into play.

The rationale behind the death penalty is that the ultimate punishment fits the ultimate crime. A life for a life. Equal. But this Hammurabi's Code-esque logic has some major flaws.

If the purpose of having laws and a justice system is to enforce behavior that is good for society, what message does it send to say "Hey, if you kill someone, we'll kill you back"? It's a logic that is outdated and ineffective, and not one that belongs in the U.S courts.

But it's ultimately up to the people. If the death penalty is to be abolished, it needs to come from the people. Cost, morality, life versus death -- all of these things need to be considered.

Editorial

And the results are in....

President: Trump: 276 Electoral Votes
Clinton: 218 Electoral Votes

*270 needed for presidency

US House of Representatives: Republicans: 236 Seats
Democrats: 191 Seats

*218 Needed for Majority

US Senate: Republicans: 51 Seats
Democrats: 47 Seats

*51 Needed for Majority