But a 2008 comprehensive review of capital punishment research since 1975 by Drexel University economist, Bijou Yang, and psychologist, David Lester, of Richard Stockton College of New Jersey concluded that the majority of studies that track effects over many years and across states or counties find a deterrent effect.

Indeed, other recent investigations, using a variety of samples and statistical methods, consistently demonstrate a strong link between executions and reduced murder rates.

For instance, a 2003 study by Emory University researchers of data from more than 3,000 counties from 1977 through 1996 found that each execution, on average, resulted in 18 fewer murders per county. In another examination, based on data from all 50 states from 1978 to 1997, Federal Communications Commission economist Paul Zimmerman demonstrated that each state execution deters an average of 14 murders annually.

A more recent study by Kenneth Land of Duke University and others concluded that, from 1994 through 2005, each execution in Texas was associated with “modest, short-term reductions” in homicides, a decrease of up to 2.5 murders. And in 2009, researchers found that adopting state laws allowing defendants in child murder cases to be eligible for the death penalty was associated with an almost 20 percent reduction in rates of these crimes. In short, capital punishment does, in fact, save lives. That’s certainly not to say that it should be exercised with wild abandon. Federal, state and local officials must continually ensure that its implementation rigorously upholds constitutional protections, such as due process and equal protection of the law. However, the criminal process should not be abused to prevent the lawful imposition of the death penalty in capital cases.

Moral indignation is an appropriate response to inherently wrongful conduct, such as that carried out by Earl Ringo Jr. While the goal of lower crime through deterrence is worthwhile, lawmakers need to place special emphasis on the moral gravity of offenses in determining the proportionality of punishment.

The execution of Ringo was morally just. And it may just save the lives of several innocents.

<https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/commentary/how-the-death-penalty-saves-lives>

Jenny Mouzos

# [The short-term effects of executions on homicides: Deterrence, displacement, or both?](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229921370_The_short-term_effects_of_executions_on_homicides_Deterrence_displacement_or_both)

[**Kenneth C Land**](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kenneth_Land)

* 36.95
* Duke University

Does the death penalty save lives? In recent years, a new round of research has been using annual time-series panel data from the 50 U.S. states for 25 or so years from the 1970s to the late 1990s that claims to find many lives saved through reductions in subsequent homicide rates after executions. This research, in turn, has produced a round of critiques, which concludes that these findings are not robust enough to model even small changes in specifications that yield dramatically different results. A principal reason for this sensitivity of the findings is that few state-years exist (about 1 percent of all state-years) in which six or more executions have occurred. To provide a different perspective, we focus on Texas, a state that has used the death penalty with sufficient frequency to make possible relatively stable estimates of the homicide response to executions. In addition, we narrow the observation intervals for recording executions and homicides from the annual calendar year to monthly intervals. Based on time-series analyses and independent-validation tests, our best-fitting model shows that, from January 1994 through December 2005, evidence exists of modest, short-term reductions in homicides in Texas in the first and fourth months that follow an execution—about 2.5 fewer homicides total. Another model suggests, however, that in addition to homicide reductions, some displacement of homicides may be possible from one month to another in the months after an execution, which reduces the total reduction in homicides after an execution to about .5 during a 12-month period. Implications for additional research and the need for future analysis and replication are discussed.   
*The short-term effects of executions on homicides: Deterrence, displacement, or both? | Request PDF*. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229921370_The_short-term_effects_of_executions_on_homicides_Deterrence_displacement_or_both> [accessed Sep 30 2018].