

## **Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2023**

***Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)***

### **Background**

Capital punishment is unjust, biased, and defective, and the United States stands alone among its peers in executing its own citizens. This barbaric punishment denies the dignity and humanity of all people, but it is disproportionately applied to people who are Black, Latinx, and poor. For example, Black people make up less than 13 percent of the nation's population while accounting for more than 42 percent of those on death row.<sup>1</sup> A nationwide study found that at least 1 in 25 people sentenced to death are innocent.<sup>2</sup> Research also reveals that capital punishment does not deter crime.<sup>3</sup> Despite overwhelming evidence against the death penalty, it remains a federal punishment.

### **Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2023**

The bicameral Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2023 would end the use of state-sanctioned murder by the U.S. Department of Justice. Specifically, this bill would:

- Prohibit the imposition of the death penalty as punishment for any violation of federal law; and
- Require the re-sentencing of those previously sentenced to death row.

Congress must urgently pass this legislation and bring an end to this barbaric practice.

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<sup>1</sup> NAACP Death Penalty Fact Sheet, NAACP (2017), <https://www.naacp.org/latest/naacp-death-penalty-fact-sheet/>.

<sup>2</sup> National Academy of Sciences Reports Four Percent of Death Row Inmates are Innocent, INNOCENCE PROJECT (Apr. 28, 2015), <https://innocenceproject.org/national-academy-of-sciences-reports-four-percent-of-death-row-inmates-are-innocent/>.

<sup>3</sup> Miachel L. Radlelet & Traci L. Lacock, *Do executions Lower Homicide Rates?*, J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY (2009), <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/legacy/files/DeterrenceStudy2009.pdf>.