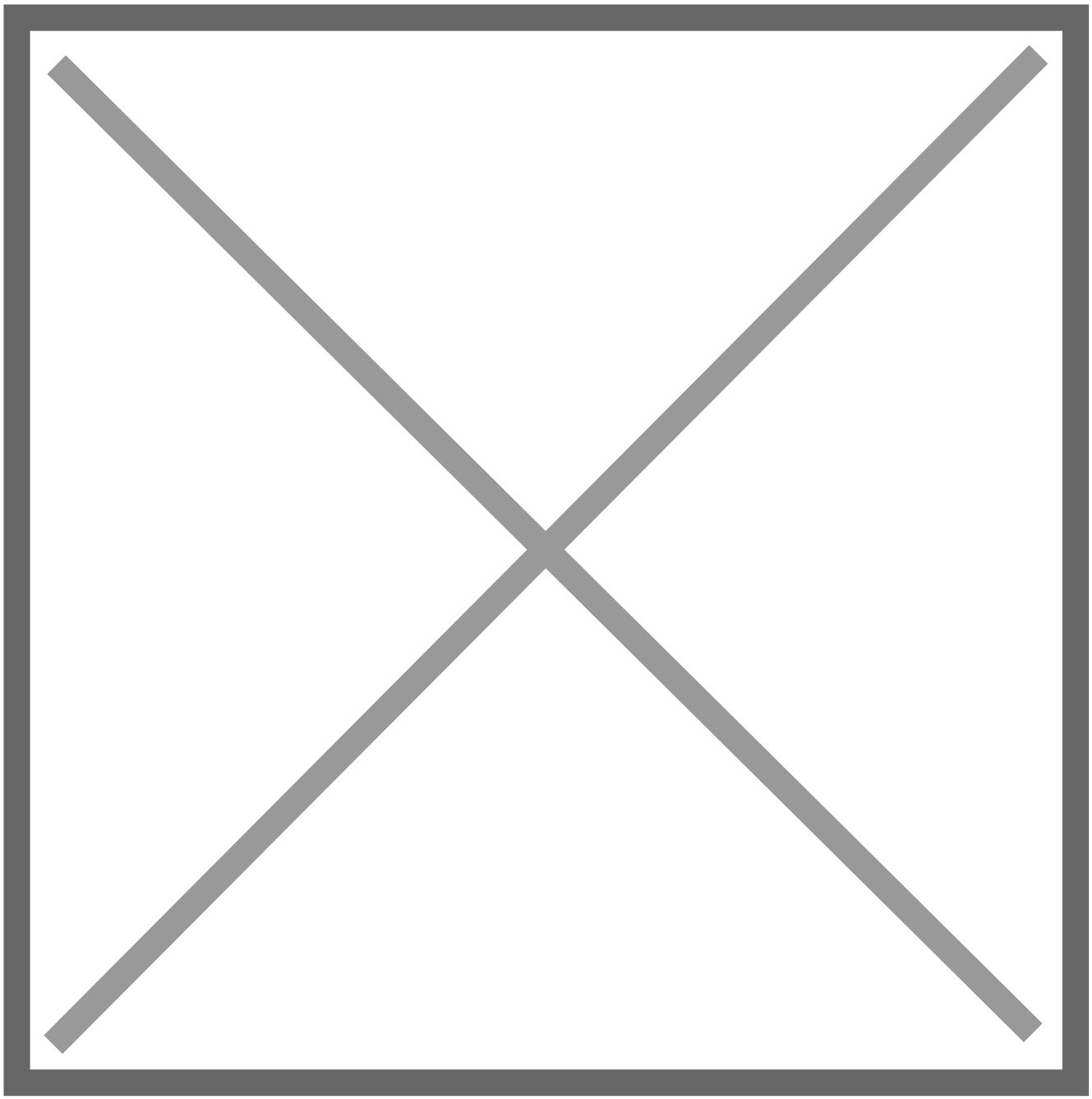
News



A file photo shows the death chamber table at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas. A sharp uptick in executions carried out in the U.S. in 2025 was largely due to a surge in Florida, says the Death Penalty Information Center's 2025 report, published Dec. 15. (OSV News/courtesy Texas Department of Criminal Justice handout via Reuters)

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Washington — December 16, 2025
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Although there was a significant increase in executions in the U.S. in 2025, a smaller number of new death sentences was imposed, a new report from the Death Penalty Information Center found.

The year-end report, published Dec. 15, said that by the end of 2025, if executions scheduled for Dec. 17 and 18 are carried out, there will have been 48 executions in the U.S., while 22 new sentences were imposed this year.

Robin Maher, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, said in a statement, "These striking numbers tell us that new death sentences are becoming vanishingly rare, and that even jurors who are willing to use the death penalty are finding reasons not to do so."

Among the first actions of his second term earlier this year, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the U.S. attorney general to "pursue the death penalty for all crimes of a severity demanding its use," and to "seek the death penalty regardless of other factors for every federal capital crime" that involves the "murder of a law-enforcement officer" or a "capital crime committed by an alien illegally present in this country."

Some states sought to follow the president's directive. Just four states — Florida, Alabama, South Carolina and Texas — were responsible for nearly three-quarters (72%) of executions in the U.S. in 2025. Florida, the report said, was the primary driver of the uptick in executions, expected to carry out 19 executions by the end of 2025, 40% of the year's total.

The report found that if Florida had executed the same number of people this year as it did in 2024, the 2025 national total would be more in alignment with previous years.

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Florida's Catholic bishops repeatedly urged DeSantis, who is Catholic, to grant clemency ahead of the state's executions.

"The increase in this year's execution numbers was caused by the outlier state of Florida, where the governor set a record number of executions," Maher said. "The data show that the decisions of Gov. DeSantis and other elected officials are increasingly at odds with the decisions of American juries and the opinions of the American public."

An October 2025 Gallup poll found that although a slim majority of Americans said they favor the death penalty for people convicted of murder, that number continued a steady decline over 30 years, dropping from a peak of 80% in 1994 to 52% in 2025. While statistically similar to its findings in the previous two years, the 2025 result marks the lowest in Gallup's death penalty trend since 1972, when 50% were in favor.

Just 12 states — Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Tennessee — were scheduled to conduct executions this year, the report said.

The Catholic Church's official magisterium opposes the use of capital punishment as inconsistent with the inherent sanctity of human life, and advocates for the practice's abolition worldwide.

The late Pope Francis revised the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 2018 to clarify the Church's teaching that capital punishment is morally "inadmissible" in the

modern world and that the Church works with determination for its abolishment worldwide.

In his 2020 encyclical "Fratelli Tutti," Pope Francis addressed the moral problem of capital punishment by citing St. John Paul II, writing that his predecessor "stated clearly and firmly that the death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from that of penal justice."

About a decade prior to becoming Pope Leo XIV earlier this year, then-Bishop Robert Prevost also called for the abolishment of capital punishment, writing in a March 5, 2015, post on X, then known as Twitter, "It's time to end the death penalty."