The Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment

Adam Law
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Amit Ghosh, Faculty Advisor
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc

Part of the Economics Commons

https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2011/oralpres/4

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Adam Law and Amit Ghosh*
Economics Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

Since the reintroduction of capital punishment in 1976 1,242 people have been executed in the United States. One of the main reasons commonly given in support of capital punishment is that its usage serves to deter other potential criminals from committing homicides. However, there is no scholarly consensus on whether or not such a deterrent effect does in fact exist. This project examines this by building on the work of Dezhbakhsh and Shepherd (2003) and using a panel set of data for all fifty states from 2000 to 2009. If no deterrent effect exists, as the results of this project suggest, it seems prudent to abolish the practice and move instead to a system in which life imprisonment is the maximum punishment one can receive.