

Texas follows national mood in executions

by UPI

AUSTIN, Texas -- Texas death sentences declined in the face of a de facto national moratorium and other legislation banning executions. Texas carried out more than 60 percent of all executions in the United States as a national tendency opposing or restricting the practice gains momentum. Yet the numbers of executions mask a moderate decline in Texas as well, as new sentencing guidelines and perceptions on the practice emerge to produce a near 13 percent decline in death sentences in 2007 compared to 1998, The New York Times said Wednesday. A 2004 study at Cornell University found the rate of death sentences in Texas reflected the high murder rate there and didn't suggest Texans were more prone to impose death penalties. The trend reflects the national mood in the United States as New Jersey banned death sentences last week and several other states consider similar legislation. A decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to hear a case concerning the constitutionality of the three-drug cocktail used in lethal injections persuaded many states to declare a de facto moratorium on carrying out death sentences.

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