

Taking Capital Punishment Seriously

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ABSTRACT: This paper addresses some conceptual and logical mistakes made by many who are engaged in the discussion of the morality of capital punishment. It then focuses on the unfairness and economic objections to capital punishment, both as an institution and as a practice, and articulates a new approach to the morality of capital punishment. The position that I shall defend in this paper is what I refer to as “capital punishment suspensionism.” It differs from capital punishment retentionism in that it does not hold that the institution and practice of capital punishment ought to continue according to the status quo. But neither does it assert, as does capital punishment abolitionism, that the institution or practice of capital punishment ought to be abolished.