T
t he vast majority of Americans believe the death penalty is just, even as many of them doubt whether the most dangerous criminals can be kept from committing additional crimes. And just a few years ago, when the federal government announced plans to resume executions after a 16-year hiatus, most Americans believed that the death penalty was a just and necessary punishment for the worst crimes.

But this weekend, as California begins a second attempt to execute a condemned inmate, the public appears to have begun to take a closer look at the entire death penalty system.

In California, the new method uses the combination of three drugs: midazolam, fentanyl, and pancuronium bromide. The theoretical purpose of midazolam is to induce unconsciousness, but some have raised concerns that the drug may cause pain or even carry a substantial risk.

The process of execution involves the following steps: first, the inmate is given an IV injection of midazolam. Then, a second injection of fentanyl is administered. The final step is to inject pancuronium bromide, which paralyzes the inmate and renders them incapable of breathing.

However, in September 2015, California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation announced that it would halt executions until the method could be thoroughly reviewed and revised. This came after a number of gruesome botches in other states, leading to concerns about the reliability and efficacy of the method.

The problem could be easily solved if the people responsible for carrying it out in California were to adopt a more transparent and accountable approach to the death penalty. The Legislature could easily exempt execution protocols from the burdensome Administrative Procedure Act and provide the necessary transparency in a more streamlined manner.

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