

Dear reader,

Our "Did You Know?" webpages expose millions of readers to entertaining, little known facts about some of the world's most controversial topics. As part of ProCon.org's 6-year anniversary (founded July 12, 2004), 10 of our topics were updated to include a minimum of 15 fun facts - 55 new facts in total - on issues such as medical marijuana, the death penalty, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and seven others. Below we've listed three fun facts from each of those 10 sites.

Also, if you're up for the trivia challenge, you can take our [Facebook quiz](#) and test your knowledge of "Did You Know?" facts.

1. ACLU: [Did You Know?](#)

- The ACLU handles nearly 6,000 cases per year and appears before the US Supreme Court more than any other organization except the US Department of Justice.
- In 1978, the ACLU lost 25% of its members and racked up \$500,000 in debt due to member disapproval over its decision to represent a neo-Nazi group in Skokie, Illinois.
- US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was the chief litigator for the ACLU's Women's Rights Project prior to commencing her judicial career.

2. Born Gay: [Did You Know?](#)

- Researchers have observed same-sex behavior in over 475 animal species.
- Estimates on the percentage of the US population that is lesbian, gay or bisexual range from 1-10%.
- In 2007 Pentagon officials confirmed that military leaders in 1994 had considered building a so-called 'Gay Bomb' which would have been loaded with aphrodisiacs intended to cause homosexual behavior in heterosexuals.

3. Death Penalty: [Did You Know?](#)

- 52 death sentences were handed down in 2009, the lowest number of death sentences since the death penalty was reinstated in the US in 1976.
- Ohio performed the first execution with a one-drug intravenous lethal injection on Dec. 8, 2009. Previous lethal injections used a combination of three drugs.
- New Hampshire and Washington currently authorize hanging as a method of execution.

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- In classical Athens, city magistrates kept a supply of poison for anyone who voluntarily wished to die.
- The earliest American statute to explicitly outlaw assisted suicide was enacted in New York on Dec. 10, 1828.
- Physician-assisted suicide is legal in three US states: Oregon, Washington, and Montana.

5. Felon Voting: [Did You Know?](#)

- Prior to becoming a US Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor said (on May 4, 2006) that felon disenfranchisement is a violation of the Voting Rights Act.
- Convicted polygamists are banned from voting or holding political office.
- Canadian convicted felons have no voting restrictions and can vote while incarcerated.

6. Illegal Immigration: [Did You Know?](#)

- 40 tunnels and subterranean passages were discovered under the US-Mexico border from Sep. 11, 2001 to Mar. 16, 2006.
- In 2005, the US Government Accountability Office estimated that 27% of all federal prisoners were illegal aliens.
- As of 2008, the unauthorized immigrant population in the United States was estimated to be approximately 11.6 million.

7. Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: [Did You Know?](#)

- Among the most religiously significant and disputed pieces of land in Jerusalem is the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif. It is the place where Jews believe their patriarch Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac during the second millennium B.C. It is also the place where Muslims believe their prophet Mohammad rose to heaven in the seventh century.
- The 2005 Gaza withdrawal included the Israeli government forcibly evacuating 8,000 Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip and dismantling 21 Jewish settlements.
- More than 97% of the 480-mile security fence planned by Israel will consist of a chain-link fence that supports an intrusion detection system.

8. Medical Marijuana: [Did You Know?](#)

- The US Department of Justice advised federal prosecutors in an Oct. 19, 2009

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the law in states that have legalized medical marijuana.

- The first cannabis-based prescription medicine, Sativex, was launched in the United Kingdom on June 21, 2010.
- The states with the three highest possession limits among the 14 states with legal medical marijuana are Oregon (24 plants), California (18 plants), and New Mexico (16 plants).

9. Under God: [Did You Know?](#)

- The US Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, a Socialist and a Baptist minister.
- Reciters of the US Pledge of Allegiance saluted the flag in a straight arm salute until Dec. 1942 when its visual similarities to the Nazi salute prompted the government to formally mandate a hand over the heart salute instead.
- On June 14, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a joint-party Congressional act which added the words "under God" to the text of the Pledge of Allegiance.

10. Voting Machines: [Did You Know?](#)

- The first direct recording electronic voting machine used in an election was patented on Feb. 19, 1974 and was called the Video Voter.
- In March 2004 electronic voting machines used in Santa Clara County, California gave audio instructions directing blind voters to press a yellow button. Blind voter Sam Chen commented, "Yellow means nothing to me."
- US Congress passed the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) following the 2000 US Presidential election to provide \$3.9 billion in funding for jurisdictions to replace lever machine and punch card systems.

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Sincerely,

Kamy Akhavan

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