

Sign-on-Letter to Repeal Nebraska's Death Penalty *for Murder Victims' Families*

We are individuals and families who have lost loved ones to murder. At a moment none of us could have predicted or prepared for, tragedy robbed from us children, parents, spouses, brothers and sisters, and other family members. Our direct experiences with the criminal justice system and struggling with grief have led us all to the same conclusion: Nebraska's death penalty fails victims' families.

We never asked to be in this position, and would do anything to change it. We realize, however, that nothing can erase the loss that a senseless act of violence brought into our lives. But we can honor the memory of our loved ones and other families who may face tragedy by working for effective responses to violence.

The reality of the death penalty is that it drags out the legal process for decades. In Nebraska, the death penalty is a false promise that goes unfulfilled, leaving victims' families frustrated and angry after years of fighting the legal system. Victims' families in capital cases go back to court for years on end where the press replays the details of the crime again and again. The result is that the defendant is turned into a celebrity while the victim's family waits for a punishment that never comes. This system burdens the vast majority of cases that don't result in a death sentence. And as the state hangs onto this broken system, it wastes millions of dollars that could go toward much needed victims' services.

The death penalty is said to be reserved for "particularly heinous murders". We have difficulty understanding this position. The implication is that other murders are ordinary and do not merit the death penalty. From experience, we can tell you that every murder is heinous, a tragedy for the lost one's family. The death penalty has the effect of elevating certain victims' families above others. Nebraska should be better than that.

As lawmakers consider whether to keep or end Nebraska's death penalty, they truly face a life or death decision. It deserves careful consideration and consultation from the primary stakeholders in the state's system of capital punishment. We urge our lawmakers to make the choice that best serves the interests of victims' families. We urge them to repeal Nebraska's death penalty.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name of victim(s): _____

Relation to victim(s): _____

Date of murder(s): _____

send this information to stacy@nadp.org or NADP, 941 'O' Street, Ste 725 Lincoln, NE 68508