

Nebraska
Conservatives
Concerned

About the
Death Penalty

A Project of NADP

The Dying Death Penalty: Momentum for Repeal is Growing

We've learned a lot about capital punishment since our state reinstated it in 1973. More and more Nebraskans and Americans are concerned that the death penalty is an ineffective, expensive, unfair system that risks executing an innocent person and harms families of murder victims. And they are recognizing that these problems can't be fixed.

"It is time for conservatives to do what they do best and insist that a wasteful, inefficient government program gets off the books. Small government and the death penalty don't go together."

Christy Clark, Republican Representative from Choteau, MT "Conservative group looks to abolish Montana death penalty," Great Falls Tribune, September 16, 2012

"Evangelicals are also becoming increasingly aware of the massive injustices carried out in the death penalty system. Throughout the Old Testament, you find various laws that God established to ensure that the poor would not be unjustly treated in courts, that innocents would never be executed, and that there would be fair application of the death penalty. These safeguards and standards rendered the death penalty almost obsolete in Bible times. The death penalty in the US has failed in these safeguards."

Bill Thornton, Assoc. Prof. of Preaching Ministries - NE Christian College

"In the years since my days on the bench, I have had much time to reflect on the experience of judging another person's life or death. The conclusion I have reached is that I can no longer support the death penalty even though I once voted in favor of executing a man."

Leland Anderson, Former Jefferson County (CO) district judge who decided two death penalty cases while on the bench "Abandon death penalty, retired judge urges," Denver Post, March 7, 2013

"Conservatives know that government is imperfect and makes mistakes. My desire to protect innocent life leads me to worry about a fallible system that has the power to take a life...If this (the death penalty) were any other government program, we would have got rid of it a long time ago."

Nebraska State Senator Colby Coash, "The death penalty is a failed policy" Watchdog.org

“Although I have no moral qualms about the death penalty, I feel it is subject to human error. One has only to refer to the recent exonerations of six men and women from...Beatrice.”

-James Murphy, Retired District Court Judge & Former Douglas County Prosecutor

Just the Facts:

- ◆ New York and New Jersey ended their death penalties in 2007. New Mexico did the same in 2009. Illinois repealed in 2011 and Connecticut in 2012. In 2013 Maryland became the 6th state in 6 years, and the 18th overall, to get rid of its death penalty.
- ◆ Death sentences and executions are at an all-time low. Sentences have dropped by 76% since 1996, and executions have also dropped by more than half since the 1990's. A full 90% of US counties did not sentence a single person to death between 2004 and 2009. Even Texas has only a handful of counties that use the death penalty.
- ◆ Results of a 2012 referendum in California indicate a dramatic shift away from the death penalty, from 71% who supported the 1978 initiative reinstating the death penalty, to less than 53% who voted to retain it this time. Over 47% of Californians – almost 4.2 million people – voted to replace the death penalty with life without parole.
- ◆ A 2013 Gallup Poll measured Americans' abstract support for the death penalty at its lowest level (60%) since 1978, and a significant decline from 1994, when 80% of respondents were in favor of the death penalty. When Gallup and other polls offer respondents a choice of the proper punishment for murder – the death penalty or life in prison without parole – the public is nearly evenly split on the question.