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<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>

Statement by Robert Dunham, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), on Nebraska's repeal of the death penalty:

“With its veto override today, Nebraska moves from a state that had discarded the death penalty in practice to one that has abolished it under the law. It becomes the first predominantly Republican state to abolish the death penalty in more than 40 years.

“In many respects, what has happened in Nebraska is a microcosm of the steady national trend away from the death penalty in the United States. [Public opinion polls](#) show that support for the death penalty is at a 40-year low nationwide, having dropped from 80 percent in the mid-1990s to 56 percent in the most recent polls. And when given a choice between the death penalty and other possible penalties for murder, polls show that [a majority of Americans reject the death penalty](#) in favor of life without possibility of parole. Opposition to the death penalty is growing among [nearly all segments](#) of the American public, but most notably – as reflected in Nebraska's repeal – it is growing among those who consider themselves to be conservatives.

“Although support for Nebraska's repeal efforts was bipartisan, conservative legislators were particularly outspoken about the death penalty's failures. They argued that the death penalty is a wasteful and ineffective government program that costs too much and accomplishes too little. They said it didn't make Nebraskans safer and that it failed family members whose loved ones have been murdered. And they argued that the nation's more than 150 death row exonerations showed that the death penalty unacceptably places innocent lives at risk.

“The efforts and arguments of Nebraska conservatives are part of an emerging trend in the Republican Party, evidenced by the involvement of conservative Republicans in legislative efforts to repeal the death penalty in other states, such as Kansas, Kentucky, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming.”

For more information on recent death penalty trends and polling, visit:

www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Additional Background

* Nebraska is the 7th State in the past ten years and the [19th State overall](#), plus the District of Columbia, to repeal the death penalty. The most recent states to abolish the death penalty are: Maryland (2013); Connecticut (2012); Illinois (2011); New Mexico (2009); New Jersey (2007); and New York (2007).

* The last predominantly Republican legislature to abolish the death penalty was North Dakota in 1973.

* Another [six States have not executed anyone](#) in more than a decade. In addition

to Nebraska, they are New Hampshire, Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Arkansas last executed a death-row inmate in November 2005.

* An additional [five States have averaged fewer than one execution per decade](#) over the past half-century. They include Idaho, Kentucky, Montana, South Dakota, and Washington, in addition to Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming.

* Governors in four of these States have imposed moratoria on carrying out executions. They are [Colorado](#), [Oregon](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Washington](#). Oregon Governor Kate Brown has [kept in place](#) the moratorium initially imposed by her predecessor, John Kitzhaber.

* In total, 26 states, the District of Columbia, the federal government, and the United States military have either abolished the death penalty, have not conducted any executions in more than a decade, or have a gubernatorial moratorium on executions.

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The Death Penalty Information Center <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/> is a nonprofit organization serving the media and the public with analysis and information on issues concerning capital punishment. DPIC was founded in 1990 and prepares in-depth reports, issues press releases, conducts briefings for the media, and serves as a resource to those working on this issue.