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Nebraska Death Penalty Repeal Measure Wins First-Round Approval

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - A bill to repeal Nebraska's death penalty has won first-round approval from lawmakers.

Lawmakers advanced the bill 30-13 on Thursday. If that support holds, death penalty opponents would have enough votes to override Gov. Pete Ricketts' promised veto.

Two additional votes are required, and death penalty supporters are still working to block the legislation. This year, the measure has won support from a coalition of Republicans who say the death penalty costs too much.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, has fought for four decades to abolish capital punishment. Lawmakers passed a repeal measure once before, in 1979, but it was vetoed by then-Gov. Charles Thone.

Ricketts on Thursday urged Nebraskans to contact their legislators and voice their opposition to the bill.

Associated Press