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Nebraska Abolishes Death Penalty

(AP) - Nebraska has abolished the death penalty in a landmark veto-override vote backed by a coalition of conservatives who oppose capital punishment.

Senators in the one-house Legislature voted 30-19 on Wednesday to override Gov. Pete Ricketts, a Republican who supports the death penalty. The vote makes Nebraska the first traditionally conservative state to eliminate the punishment since North Dakota in 1973.

Nebraska joins 18 other states and Washington, D.C., in banning the ultimate punishment.

Some senators say they philosophically support the death penalty but are convinced the state will never carry out another execution because of legal hurdles. Nebraska hasn't executed an inmate since a 1997 electrocution.

The bill was introduced by independent Sen. Ernie Chambers, who has fought for four decades to repeal the death penalty.

Associated Press