

**Minutes of the 10/30/2016 Meeting of Saunders County Democrats
at the Ceresco Community Center**

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. Present were Executive Committee Chair M-J Divis, Secretary Maria M. Cadwallader, PR/Media Specialist Emily Koehler, LCD 1 Representative Jennifer Norris, Merrion Brooks, Jim Hunter, Martha Hunter, and Fran Kaye, representing Retain a Just Nebraska.

Kaye talked about the need to vote to Retain Nebraska's elimination of the death penalty. She mentioned that statistics to strengthen the argument against the death penalty show that the death penalty does not lower the murder rate and thus does not act as self-defense. For example, Missouri, a top user of the death penalty, has the highest murder rate (8.3/100,000 population) among its adjacent states, while Iowa without the death penalty is much lower (2.3/100,000 population). Eight of the 10 states that have the death penalty have the highest murder rates. Even murder rates inside prisons are lower in states which have no death penalty.

Kaye explained that Nebraska's current lack of the death penalty does not cause murderers to be released. Those convicted of manslaughter rather than murder are released at the end of their sentence even when a death penalty is in effect, and some few of them may later commit murder. Convicted murderers also say they never considered whether there was a death penalty before committing murder, so having a death penalty would not deter them. Nor do penalties prevent other kinds of assault. What is needed, she said, is effective prevention, such as that provided to released prisoners through programs created by recent Nebraska justice reforms.

Kaye also talked about the need for serious reform of Nebraska's foster care system, to prevent children's deaths in foster care and institutions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Maria M. Cadwallader, Secretary
Saunders County Democrats