



# Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

## Redistricting Shakes Up Kansas Legislature

Summer is in full swing and the last month has brought some significant changes to Kansas government, particularly the new legislative district boundaries. We've put together this special election edition of the newsletter to help get you updated on information you may need for this year's election season.

Every 10 years the Kansas Legislature is required to redraw political boundaries for Congressional, state House and state Senate districts to reflect population changes in the state. This year, after the Kansas Legislature was unable to reach an agreement on redistricting maps, a federal court stepped in and essentially hit the reset button on Kansas politics.

Many of the new districts are dramatically different from the previous ones, and the resulting changes will have a major impact on next year's legislature. Of the 125 districts in the Kansas House, 23 of the new districts have more than one incumbent legislator now living in the same district. This left 25 new districts without any incumbent legislator residing there. Four out of the 40 Senate districts have more than one incumbent legislator and another four were also left with no incumbent.

Because of these significant changes, several incumbent legislators are retiring or have moved to run in different districts. Several candidates have only primary opposition, which means that these races will be essentially decided after the August 7th primary election. Whatever the outcome of this year's elections, these candidates will become the policymakers that will be responsible for repealing the death penalty. Please read our "From the Chair" column on page 2 to see how YOU can make a difference in the campaign for abolition this summer.

**The new legislative districts will have a big impact on you as well. Because the districts are very different than those of the past 10 years, many Kansas voters are now finding themselves in a new district. You should double check which district you live in under the new boundaries.**

You can easily look up your district online at [www.openkansas.org](http://www.openkansas.org). You can enter your full address on the website, and it will tell you the district number for your new Senate and House districts, as well as the candidates who are running in those districts. If you need assistance looking up your new districts, please contact KCADP at [info@ksabolition.org](mailto:info@ksabolition.org) or 785-235-2237.

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### Important dates for the 2012 elections:

- **Today** - Check your House and Senate districts
- **July 17** - Last day to register to vote or to change party affiliation for the Primary
- **August 7** - Primary Election Day
- **October 16** - Last day to register to vote for the General Election
- **November 6** - General Election Day

## From the Board Chair...

By Donna Schneweis

Election season is already underway, and this summer is a great time for you to take action to help end the death penalty in Kansas. With the many changes brought on by redistricting, we know that we will see many new faces in the legislature next year. Having new legislators also means that we have new opportunities to engage our elected leaders on the issue of abolition.

But we don't have to wait until November to get started! This summer, the candidates running for the state House and Senate will be out meeting voters like you. It's the perfect opportunity for you to help educate candidates about the harmful effects of the death penalty.

Candidate education is especially important this year because so many people who have not been in the legislature before are running for office. Many of these candidates may not be very familiar with the death penalty or the issue of abolition. While KCADP is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization and we do not endorse candidates for office, a major part of KCADP's mission is to educate legislators, policymakers and the general public about the effects of the death penalty. True to our educational focus, KCADP is already working this summer to educate candidates about the Kansas death penalty by sending an informational packet to each candidate running for seats in the state legislature.

But we also need your help. Candidates want to know what issues are important in their districts, and who better to tell them than the constituents living there? That is why it is so important for you to talk to your candidates and your legislators about why the death penalty is failing Kansans. Your voice is instrumental to helping candidates understand how important abolition is to Kansans.

### Here are a few quick tips to help you talk to your candidates about the death penalty:

- Look for an opportunity to speak with candidates in a one-on-one setting. Asking about their position in a public setting can often prompt a cautious answer, while one-on-one settings create safer space for discussion. Be sure to tell candidates that abolishing the death penalty is an important issue to you and share your reasons why.
- Ask candidates where they stand on the issue. Even if they support the death penalty initially, they might have some reservations about it. This is why your voice is so important. By having a dialogue with your candidates about the reasons you are concerned about the death penalty, you may get them thinking about an issue they have not thought about before.

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## New Organizer to Join KCADP In July

KCADP is honored to announce that Kristin Bollig will be joining our staff as an organizer in mid-July.



We hope you will join us in welcoming Kristin as the newest member of our team!

## Get Involved!

### Join the KCADP Email List

You'll receive news updates, upcoming events and information about actions you can take to support abolition. Sign up by emailing [info@ksabolition.org](mailto:info@ksabolition.org) or returning the form on the back of this newsletter.

### Donate

Your contribution will go a long way toward making abolition a reality in Kansas. Donations fund educational events, and print materials like this newsletter. Contribute online today at [www.ksabolition.org/donate](http://www.ksabolition.org/donate) or mail your donation to KCADP using the form on the back of this newsletter.



# The Death Penalty: Some Facts to Consider

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1. **Mistakes:** Anyone who pays attention to the media knows that innocent persons are convicted and sent to prison. This kind of mistake occurred in Kansas. The error in Riley County was very costly for the counties and agencies involved: 7.5 million. This, thankfully, was not a death penalty case.

Nationally, 140 persons have been released from death row due to wrongful conviction. The Riley County case reminds us that it could happen here. Kansas could send an innocent person to death row.

*"Settlement reached in wrongful conviction"  
Wichita Eagle 2/7/2010*

2. **Arbitrariness:** Who gets sentenced to death is impacted by where the crime occurs. That means justice isn't the same throughout Kansas.

*Kansas Judicial Council November 2004:  
"...there is a geographic disparity in whether  
these capital charges are brought to trial."*

3. **Our money:** Paying for the death penalty is costly. It means our tax dollars fund a process of lengthy litigation; many steps of which are required by the US Supreme Court. The cost of the death penalty is an issue all over the US because it reduces money available for other essential state services.

*"Death and Taxes: The Real Cost of the Death Penalty"  
Forbes, 9/22/2011*

4. **Public Safety:** Persons convicted of capital murder in Kansas today who are not sentenced to death will spend the rest of their life in prison. Recent bills to abolish the Kansas death penalty contained life without parole as the sentencing provision.

*"Longoria gets life term in DeBolt's murder"  
Hays Daily News, 6/26/2012*

**Risk of Error + Arbitrary + More Costly + Not Necessary = Get Rid of It!**

**For more information please contact:**  
Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty  
P.O. Box 2065 Topeka, KS 66601  
785-235-2237 or [info@ksabolition.org](mailto:info@ksabolition.org)

## From the Board Chair Continued:

- Most importantly, don't assume that you know your candidates' position on the death penalty. Abolition supporters come from across the political spectrum and from all over the state.

Finally, please use the enclosed handout to share information on the death penalty with your candidates. You can give this handout to candidates, or use it to help talk to them about the issue.

Remember, it is important for candidates to hear directly from the voters themselves about the issues that matter to them. Please take some time this summer to tell your candidates why it is time for Kansas to get rid of the death penalty once and for all.

Contact us at 785-235-2237 or [info@ksabolition.org](mailto:info@ksabolition.org) if you have questions about how to help with candidate education.

*Congratulations to the  
Connecticut Network  
to Abolish the Death  
Penalty!*

On April 25, 2012, Connecticut became the 17th state to abolish capital punishment. Connecticut's victory reminds us again that abolition is not just a dream. We can make it a reality.

Kansas has had the death penalty for 18 years, and in that time we have seen that it is clearly a broken system. Now is the time for every Kansan to get involved. Together we can show legislators and our fellow Kansans that Kansas is ready to replace the death penalty with life without parole.

## On the Issues: Abolition

During this election season it is also important for you as a voter to know where your legislators stand on the issue of abolishing the death penalty. During the 2010 Legislative Session, the Senate voted on SB 375, a bill to abolish the death penalty. That bill failed to pass on a tied 20-20 vote. In the Spring 2010 KCADP newsletter, we published the information about that vote. Here is a recap of how senators voted for your reference:

### **Senators voting Yes (to abolish the death penalty):**

Brungardt, Emler, Faust-Goudeau, Francisco, Haley, Hensley, Kelly, Kultala, Lee, McGinn, Morris, Owens, Pilcher-Cook, Reitz, Vicki Schmidt, Steineger, Taddiken, Teichman, Umbarger, Vratil.

### **Senators voting No (to retain the death penalty):**

Abrams, Apple, Barnett, Brownlee, Bruce, Colyer, Donovan, Holland, Huelskamp, Huntington, Kelsey, Lynn, Marshall, Masterson, Ostmeyer, Petersen, Pyle, Derek Schmidt, Schodorf, Wagle.

Source: *Journal of the Senate*, February 19, 2010, pages 1093-1095. Available online at: <http://www.kansas.gov/government/legislative/journals/2010/sj0219.pdf>. The journal also contains individual explanations of votes by several senators.

The House has not voted on any abolition legislation, but the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice held an informational hearing in March 2012. The Spring 2012 newsletter featured a report on the hearing. That information is also available on our website at <http://www.ksabolition.org/featured/hearing-in-the-house-a-great-success>.

*The Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. We do not endorse candidates for public office. KCADP is dedicated to educating candidates for public office, policymakers and the public about the death penalty.*



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If you want to receive your newsletter via email, please use the form below. If you enjoy the newsletter and want to support the anti-death penalty effort with a financial contribution, please use the form below to send a donation. Make checks payable to: **KCADP**. Our address is: P.O. Box 2065, Topeka, KS 66601. *We thank you for your support!* KCADP now accepts donations online via PayPal! Visit our website at [www.ksabolition.org](http://www.ksabolition.org) to contribute online today!

<p><b><u>Please send my newsletter by email:</u></b></p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>EMAIL: _____</p> <p>STREET ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>CITY: _____</p> <p>COUNTY: _____</p> <p>ZIPCODE: _____</p> <p>PHONE: _____</p>	<p><b><u>I would like to donate to KCADP:</u></b></p> <p>ENCLOSED FIND \$ _____</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>STREET ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>CITY: _____</p> <p>ZIPCODE: _____</p> <p>PLEASE SEND ME A TAX RECEIPT: _____</p> <p><b>(Please note that we are a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible.)</b></p>
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