



Pete Ricketts
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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August 17, 2020

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and
Members of the Legislature
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Legislature:

I am returning LB 238 without my signature and with my objections.

LB 238 adds additional burdens to the process of carrying out the death penalty in Nebraska. The legislation would require that witnesses who are present continuously observe the execution process from the moment the inmate enters the execution chamber until the inmate is declared dead or the execution is halted. The bill's additional restrictions would mandate changes to the current execution protocol.

LB 238 purports to protect the identity of the person conducting the execution by allowing that person to wear a mask. Under current law, his or her identity is protected.

Members of the execution team are employees of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services who volunteer for this responsibility. Wearing a mask or disguise in an attempt to conceal their identity could impede necessary procedures if the staff member's eyesight is hindered or blocked. Ultimately, the staff member would still be easily identified by gender, race, hair, weight, and height. Protecting the identity of the staff who are required to perform this duty on behalf of the State is done for their safety and the safety of their families.

Carrying out Nebraska's death penalty is a sobering responsibility that is assigned to state staff members. To have members of an execution team wearing a mask or disguise would make a mockery of the execution and show a complete lack of respect for the inmate, the inmate's family, and for family of the victims.

For these reasons, I have vetoed LB 238. Given that the Legislature has adjourned sine die, I filed the vetoed bill with the Nebraska Secretary of State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pete Ricketts".

Pete Ricketts
Governor