

Texas executes more of its citizens than any state in the country, and there's new evidence that what we call justice is actually a corrupt, inhumane and morally indefensible system.

Alex Hannaford's cover story this month (June 2015) shows an alarming correlation between trauma that happens to adolescent boys, the biological damage it does to their brains, how that altered physiology leads to violent behavior in their adult lives and their ultimate journeys

to death row.

It's been clear for a long time that poverty, violence, poor education and crime are interconnected. (We executed a 45-year old man last year whose education ended in fourth grade and a 53-year old man this year whose education ended in sixth grade.) And 97 percent of the people on death row are men.

We traditionally have used that sociological framework to examine homicidal behavior. Then, we find a personal com-

fort level with it and our individual moral codes.

But new studies and that data Hannaford collected from Texas death row inmates show the situation is more complex. There also are biological factors at work, and that discovery raises new questions about the morality of the Texas system.

As recently as the 1980s, professionals believed that the human brain was genetically determined by the time of birth. Now, studies by American and

British scholars show that trauma actually changes the physiology of the brain and that those altered brains work differently in males and females. (Females tend to process the stress and trauma internally, directing destructive action at themselves; men tend to process it externally, focusing violence on other people.)

Male children who are physically, emotionally and/or sexually traumatized experience physical changes to their brains that make violence a common response to similar experiences later in life.

When that violence leads to a capital crime, the state places the man on death row, where the average inmate spends a full decade in an environment of emotional isolation, physical deprivation, authoritarian relationships and little or no interaction with any type of family or support network.

It's a classic list designed for an assault on someone's mental well-being. In fact, the state essentially drives many of those waiting to be executed insane. Then, we stick a needle in the arm of that adult traumatized child and kill him.

It is a shameful, barbaric process that many of us choose to look past, but every person who loves Texas should look directly at it. Texas is better than this.

## West Texas Coalition Of Democrats Meet In Dimmitt

By Neoma Williams

I (Neoma Williams) last week got an email from Sylvia Perkins of Amarillo informing me of a meeting of Democrats on Saturday evening in Dimmitt's City Hall.

Since I began publishing *The Pulse* monthly last year, I thought I would have more time to attend some Democratic meetings. I receive emails from Amarillo and Lubbock inviting me to attend some informational meetings. Until Saturday, I hadn't been to a one for various reasons, most of which involve mine and Don's health. We have gotten old.

Since I had a total knee replacement surgery on June 8, and am on the way to recovering from this major surgery, I decided I could surely get to Dimmitt for this meeting.

When I drove up, I saw about 20 cars and thought, "Wow, are there really this many people in Castro County willing to identify as Democrats?"

The meeting had begun a little early. I went in and looked at a diverse crowd. I was met by our Castro County Democratic chairperson, Joyce Thomas. I saw a couple of people from Hart and the rest I found were continued to Page 9



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