

Capital Punishment And Life Without Parole For Juvenile Offenders

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Juvenile Crime and the Case Against Irreversible Punishment

Currently, there are more than two thousand underage children serving sentences in juvenile centers across the country. It is not prudent to take away the life of a child and ruin it forever instead of giving an individual an opportunity to rejoin civil society. Therefore, capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders should be abolished as a matter of urgency since the act has not solved the problem of crimes, and it violates the Eighth Amendment. The proponent of the act argues that it removes the fear of safety and security since people would not be afraid of certain rogue kids. However, life without parole for juvenile offenders should be abolished since it violates the Constitution and the right to life for all citizens. To deviate from the purpose, the act without established juvenile centers in the United States would give children the opportunity to rebuild their lives and become part of civil society.

Though more than eight states have allowed capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders, the act is illegal and should be abolished. Everyone has the right to live in society, and the act of life without parole violates the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution; therefore, no child should be put to life in prison without parole (Tiffany 15). Several Supreme Courts have ruled against the act, and therefore, it would be unfair for the United States Supreme Court to support the act. In the case, *State v. Andrews*, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled that Andrew was a child, and for all reason, he could not be jailed for life in prison. The court further states that all punishment available for juveniles who committed first degree is prison unless there is proof that the crime was committed as an adult.

Life without parole for juvenile offenders should also be abolished since children who commit crimes do not act to the same degree as adults. Research has established that most children who commit crimes are influenced by social factors, which sometimes they do not have control over (Jonathan 25). Therefore, subjecting a child to several years in jail or murder for a crime a child committed when fourteen years old cannot be fair, and it is unjust. Abolishing life without parole does not mean offenders are going to be realized. It means giving juvenile offenders an opportunity to be rehabilitated so they can have another life. Studies indicate that several juveniles have been rehabilitated until they become better people in society and are making a difference in their lives (Sarah 23). It is better to provide an opportunity for a child to build his or her life or take it away and ruin it forever. This is a million questions that the Supreme Court of the United States should consider

as they discuss whether to introduce capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders.

Life Without Parole and the Developmental Status of Young Offenders

The sentence of a juvenile to life in prison without parole is a judgment that translates that the offender will never rejoin the civil society. According to Laurence and Scott (5), it is a harsh punishment that befits only adults who have committed terrible crimes. It is not an affair punishment for a juvenile whose character is still unconfirmed, and the involvement in crime is a reflection of immaturity and also influenced by the adolescent stage. In the previous ruling, the Supreme Court judge, Judge Kennedy, stated that minors, even at the age of seventeen years, have behavioral issues that affect their actions, and this does not reflect the true character of a child (Laurence and Scott 15). Research has indicated that children who have been through juvenile centers end up having a good life and becoming law-abiding citizens. The judgment illustrated that juvenile recklessness, impulsivity, and susceptibility are a result of peer pressure, which makes them act irresponsibly. And if juveniles are given a chance, they can change their lives in the future. It is argued that juvenile personalities and character traits are less fixed and transitory than adults. It is then not an affair to introduce life without parole for juvenile offenders because juveniles should be rehabilitated to become better people. Rehabilitation has worked before, and it is appropriate to continue rehabilitating juveniles by readmitting them to civil society.

Juveniles should not be sentenced to death or life in jail without parole. Issuing harsh punishment to immature adolescent children only relieve them the opportunity to excel in life and become a better person. Research has also established that kids' behaviors are always influenced by outside pressure. Again, children still have the capacity for reform, and therefore, they can still change their lives. Therefore, the death penalty or life without parole can be so cruel and very unusual in civil society. Several rulings have been made before to abolish life without parole, for instance, in the case of *Roper V. Simmons*, 543. U. 551 (2005), where the Supreme Court dismissed the case and ruled that Simmons is a juvenile and a crime committed as a juvenile should not be executed similarly away to an adult case, and therefore, the first-degree charges invalidated (Gale, Cengage Learning 15). However, the Supreme Court judges should look at the wisdom of the bench, which made this brilliant ruling decades ago and save juveniles from being locked up forever.

The proponents of capital punishment and life without parole for juveniles argue that everybody should be treated equally and that crimes committed by juveniles are equal and should be addressed on the same measure. Most of them believe that a crime committed by a child is worth a harsh punishment to set an example for the rest. Proponents also argue that giving parole to juveniles might increase the crime rate in the future, and therefore, they should be punished to remove the fear so that we can have a safe and secure civil society. However, the arguments of proponents fail to consider two facts: Juveniles are growing, and as children grow, they adapt, change, and transform as

well; therefore, the possibility of a child turning into a good citizen is high. The Eighth Amendment and other jurisprudences that judges had used to dismiss previous cases like *Roper V. Simmons* should be given maximum thought before making any harsh decision regarding life without parole and capital punishment for juvenile offenders.

Public Safety, Accountability, and the Possibility of Rehabilitation

There is no doubt that teenagers who commit serious crimes should be punished, and society should be protected from teenagers who are violent and dangerous. It is upon the authority to act fast and do what it takes to protect innocent citizens from dangerous criminals, whether young, old, or juvenile. However, several studies have indicated that many juveniles have been rehabilitated and become good law-abiding citizens. It is illustrated that many juveniles have worked out of the center and rejoined civil society to become good citizens. Research has shown that almost 55% of juveniles have been readmitted to society and are now doing well and respect the law.

Therefore, the notion that juveniles cannot be rehabilitated is a perception that does not have any facts in science or research and does not have any psychological backing. It is not possible to be sure that a juvenile convicted of a crime will grow up to become a career criminal. It is not in our ability to make such decisions in juvenile life that we forget about the larger picture, the future. Juveniles can change and have proven to change with time to become better adults, and therefore, the decision of the Supreme Court regarding capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders should consider various factors to life.

In conclusion, everyone wants a peaceful, safe, and secure environment to live and putting juvenile offenders in confinement for years is not the best way to achieve that peace and security. Therefore, capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders should be abolished forever. Research establishes that juveniles commit criminal acts when under the influence, and therefore, most of them do not know what they are doing. It is appropriate to give such children time to rebuild their future and become a better person in society rather than ruining it forever. Again, it is obvious children can change to become better people after rehabilitation, and therefore, juvenile offenders should be rehabilitated instead of subjecting them to long-term suffering in jail. It is the best method to build the future generation that can take care of their needs. Therefore, the Supreme Court judges sitting in Washington, D.C., should not consider capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders.

The relevant Supreme Court decisions are examined in [juvenile life-without-parole rulings](#).

Works Cited

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