



Seeking Murder Victims Families of Teenage Offenders Sentenced to Life in Prison

The National Organization of Victims of Juvenile Lifers is trying to find murder victims' families of those few cases nationally where the murderer or accomplice was under the age of 18, but tried and sentenced to natural life as an adult offender. The acronym for these cases is JLWOP – "Juvenile Life without Parole."

- There are approximately 1500 murderers in prisons nationwide who were under 18 at the time of their crimes, but were tried and sentenced to life as adults because of the exceptionally serious nature of their crimes.
- We know that often victims' families of murder cases where the offender is sentenced to natural life do not register for victim notification, and do not retain information that might be vital for future parole hearings, because they do not think it is necessary with an LWOP sentence.
- There have been two Supreme Court rulings granting retroactive changes in juvenile sentencing law and that have fueled the movement to retroactively end all life sentences for younger offenders, no matter the seriousness of their crime or the demonstrated culpability of the offender.
 - *Roper v Simmons*, 2005, abolished the death penalty for all juvenile offenders
 - *Graham v Florida*, 2010 abolished life sentences for non-murder cases for juveniles
- There is a well-funded and organized advocacy effort nationally to end all JLWOP sentences retroactively and prospectively. They have national coalitions and state groups with millions of dollars in budget and staff, none of which has been devoted to reaching out to, notifying, or supporting the victims' families of these crimes who do not know about their efforts.
 - State legislation has already passed to abolish JLWOP in CO and TX
 - State legislation has been proposed in CA, PA, MI, IL, FL, AL, and is being considered in several other states that could retroactively undo life sentences of some of these murder cases. It is in most danger of passing in CA and MI
 - Federal legislation has been proposed to require states to offer parole opportunities to all JLWOP cases nationally
- Victims' Families of these cases are not being contacted or told that pending legislation is being proposed that could retroactively undo the natural life sentences the offenders in their cases are serving.

NOVJL is seeking all victims families of JLWOP cases nationally as we work together to protect the sentences of those who killed our loved ones. View stories of these crimes, get the facts, and contact us at www.jlwopvictims.org.