

The National Organization of Victims of "Juvenile Lifers"

LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE SENTENCES FOR CONVICTED MURDERERS UNDER THREAT IN MICHIGAN!

Victims Rights to be Notified and Heard Are NOT Being Respected!
**CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS and tell them to oppose HB 4518, 4594, 4595, 4596
and Senate Bills 173, 174, 175, 176 and NOTIFY all Victims' Families!**

Life Without the Possibility of Parole sentences for hundreds of convicted murderers could be retroactively undone without notifying the victims' families. Advocates for the offenders advance myths and ignore the victims' rights:

- **MYTH:** The real "problem" with the whole situation is the age of the offender.
FACT: The real problem is that someone is dead - murdered. And there is nothing but devastation left in the wake of this crime.
- **MYTH:** We solve this "problem" by helping the killers in prison obtain regular hearings for possible release.
FACT: We address this "problem" by helping the victims of these crimes deal with the staggering and life-changing harms done to them and provide them with legal finality.
- **MYTH:** The offenders in these cases are "children."
FACT: 53% of all the offenders serving "juvenile life without parole" (JLWOP) were 17 at the time of their offenses - hardly "children." The majority of the remaining were 16. Only the smallest number of cases - and the ones publicized the most - were younger at the time of their offenses. Every one of these offenders was adjudicated an adult in a court of law.
- **MYTH:** The ages of the offenders are not considered in the legal process.
FACT: Most states give these offenders extra layers of review and protection because of their age. Many teens guilty of murder do not end up in the adult system in the United States. However, we do agree that one possible reform might be in eliminating mandatory transfers to adult court, giving judges more discretion.
- **MYTH:** Many of the JLWOP offenders are innocent.
FACT: Most of the offenders serving JLWOP sentences are guilty of their crimes. Some are convicted as direct accomplices with equal legal responsibility. Sometimes the accomplice actually directs the crime and is even more culpable than the "trigger man."
- **MYTH:** The frontal lobes of the brains of teens are not fully developed and therefore they are not fully culpable.
FACT: The argument of frontal lobe development is not applicable here. If this were true, no one could be tried or sentenced as an adult until their 30's! In fact, people learn right from wrong at a very young age and can behave accordingly. When these offenders chose to murder our loved ones, they knew it was wrong and illegal.

We are asking the offender advocates and legislators to observe Victims Rights and respect Restorative Justice principles. The crimes in these cases represent the "worst of the worst." The victims' families are key stakeholders and should be involved in this public policy discussion. They have a right to be notified of these pending bills that could free their loved ones' killers and sentence them to a lifetime of re-traumatizing parole hearings.

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