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RESOLUTION

Supporting the Elimination of Life Without Possibility of Release or Parole Sentences for Juveniles

Whereas, the King County Bar Association is committed to the mission of the KCBA, including to promote a just and accessible legal system, to benefit the community through its own efforts and offer input into matters of public policy;

Whereas, it has been long recognized that juvenile decision making is characterized by emotional and cognitive immaturity and intense peer pressure and that juveniles make choices that are less responsible than those made by mature adults in similar situations;

Whereas, reputable studies support that significant criminal punishment is less effective as a deterrent for juveniles than for adults because, unlike adults, juveniles are more prone to emotional, irrational behavior and much less likely to think through all their actions and even when penalties are harsher there is no significant impact on juveniles;

Whereas, reputable studies support that it is important to have a possibility of release or parole because it provides incarcerated youth a sense of hope and the motivation to exhibit good behavior while working towards rehabilitation so they can become functioning members of society;

Whereas, sentencing juveniles to life without possibility of release or parole ignores juveniles' lesser culpability, their greater vulnerability as compared to adults as well as their potential for rehabilitation;

Whereas, juveniles must be held accountable for crimes they commit, but they should not be punished as adults;

Whereas, the United States Supreme Court has ruled that children are "categorically less culpable than adults" (*Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551, 553, 125 S. Ct. 1183 (2005));

Therefore, be it further resolved that the King County Bar Association supports the elimination of life without possibility of release or parole sentences for juveniles in the state of Washington.

*Adopted by the Board of Trustees
November 16, 2011*