



## The Convention on the Rights of the Child says...

**CRC Article 40** – Juvenile Justice

**UDHR Article 6** – Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law

**UDHR Article 7** – Right to Equality before the Law

**UDHR Article 9** – Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest/Exile

**UDHR Article 10** – Right to Fair Public Hearing

**UDHR Article 11** – Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty

## Key Questions

- Why is the sentencing of youth to life without parole different than sentencing an adult to LWOP?
- Are juveniles only sentenced to LWOP if they have committed murder?
- What type of racial discrimination exists?
- Are you the same person today that you will be in 25 years from now?

## Facts and Figures

- Approximately 260 youth have been sentenced to JLWOP in CA.
- 38 other states allow JLWOP.
- CA law allowing JLWOP was enacted in 1990, yet international law (ICCPR and CRC) prohibits JLWOP.
- In the rest of the world, only seven other youth are known to have been sentenced to LWOP.
- Juvenile court emphasizes 2nd chances and rehabilitation, but JLWOP does not allow for this.
- Teens are still developing and as such, are more open to change and rehabilitation.
- 59% of JLWOP are 1st time offenders, with no juvenile or adult record (national figure)
- In over half of these JLWOP cases in CA, the adult co-defendant (often the “trigger” person) received a lesser sentence.
- African American youth in California serve life without parole at a rate 18 times higher than the rate of white youth.
- Hispanic youth serve life without parole at a rate five times higher the rate of white youth in the state.
- Approximately 3/4 of those surveyed by HRW had strong ties to family/community. This increases the chance of rehabilitation.

## HRW Recommendations:

- Enact legislation that would abolish the sentence of LWOP for youth under 18.
- Ensure meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation, education, and vocational training.
- Periodically assess eligibility of youth offenders to parole.

## Tent Activities and Outfitting Ideas

- Create a mock jail cell to give students an idea of what being imprisoned is like. Reference NPR's [At Pelican Bay Prison, a Life in Solitary](#) for ideas on how to outfit the cell.

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## Further Resources

[Juvenile Justice Toolkit](#), Student Task Force

[Testimony of Sara Kruzan](#) JLWOP server.

[“When I Die, They’ll Send Me Home”](#) Human Rights Watch, 2008.

[“The Rest of Their Lives”](#) Human Rights Watch Executive Summary, 2008.