

TOO YOUNG TO DRINK! TOO YOUNG TO VOTE! TOO YOUNG TO EXECUTE!

Coalition Partners

American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky
Amnesty International
Catholic Conference of Kentucky
Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice
Children's Alliance
Christ the Healer Church, Edmonton
Church Women United (Louisville Area)
Commonwealth of Kentucky Office of Public Advocacy
Dominican Sisters, Cong. of St. Catharine of Siena
Fairness Campaign
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Glenmary Sisters
Greater Community Council
Greater Louisville AME Ministerial Fellowship
Interdenominational Ministerial Coalition
Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish
Federation of Louisville
Justice and Peace Office, Diocese of Covington
Justice Resource Center
Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
Kentucky Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Kentucky Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Kentucky Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants
Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
Kentucky Council of Churches
Kentucky Disciples Peace Fellowship
Kentucky Domestic Violence Association
Kentucky Fairness Alliance
Kentucky Mental Health Counselors Association
Kentucky Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation
Kentucky Native American Support Group
Kentucky Psychological Association
Kentucky Psychiatric Association
Kentucky Rainbow Coalition
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Mental Health Association of Kentucky
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Mercy Justice Coalition (Sisters of Mercy)
National Organization for Women [NOW]
No More Violence Campaign
Office of Social Concerns, Diocese of Owensboro
Peace and Justice Commission, Archdiocese of Louisville
Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency
St. Luke Catholic Church, Salyersville
Quaker Committee on Kentucky Legislation
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Sisters of Loretto
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Ursuline Sisters of Louisville
Ursuline Sisters of Maple Mount Kentucky
Women and Men Religious Against the Death Penalty

Kentuckians can now put to death children who commit a capital crime at the age of 16 or 17, even though medical experts clearly establish that 16 and 17-year old children are still developing their emotional and cognitive abilities, and **lack adult judgment**. This practice must end.

- ◆ A majority of states in the U.S. (31) do not execute juveniles.
- ◆ Only three nations are known to execute juvenile offenders: the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Iran.
- ◆ 63% of Kentuckians, polled by the University of Kentucky, support legislation to end the death penalty for juveniles. In the U.S., even after the Lee Malvo case polls show that only 26% support the death penalty for juveniles.
- ◆ Kentuckians can already protect society and punish juvenile offenders severely without resorting to killing them.
- ◆ Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate, are supporting this important children's bill.

YES

HB 475
SB 166

JUVENILES ARE NOT YET ADULTS DEVELOPMENTALLY

In many every day matters, the law recognizes that juveniles are not as mature as adults. We do not allow juveniles under 18 to smoke or vote. We make them wait until they are 21 to drink alcohol.

In fact, medical doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists agree that juveniles are not yet adults developmentally, but still developing emotional and cognitive abilities.

- The conventional wisdom that the brain finishes development at puberty has been disproved.
- MRI technology has shown that the brain is still undergoing dramatic growth. Importantly, the areas of the brain that calm emotions, control impulses, make decisions, and process abstract ideas are not fully matured until into the 20s.
- Juveniles' personalities are not yet fully formed. The diagnostic handbook of psychiatrists, the DSM-IV, recommends against diagnosing "personality disorders," including sociopathic personality, for persons under 18.
- Gender differences in maturity of judgment and anti-social choices have been shown. Females under 21 reached a level of judgment that males only reached in the 25-year-old group.

Because a child's brain is not fully developed, these professional organizations support abolishing the death penalty for juveniles: American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychiatric Association, National Mental Health Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and American Psychological Association.

JURIES CAN IMPRISON JUVENILES FOR LIFE WITHOUT THE DEATH SENTENCE

Understandably, when a heinous crime is committed prosecutors, juries, and the community want to be sure that convicted criminals cannot repeat the crime.

Without the death penalty, Kentucky law provides these sentences for juveniles:

- A life sentence without possibility of parole for 25 years means at least 25 years in prison. Usually it means longer because the Parole Board seldom paroles persons the first time they appear before them.
- A life sentence means a prisoner is eligible for parole after 20 years. Again, it is unlikely the Parole Board would grant parole after that length of time. Without parole, a prisoner may remain in prison the rest of his or her life.
- A capital offense is a Class A offense and carries a sentence up to 50 years. A person sentenced to 50 years is not eligible for parole until 20 years have been served.

The Kentucky criminal justice system has good procedures in place to insure against the inappropriate release of dangerous prisoners. Since juveniles are still maturing and after years of rehabilitation and treatment in prison may no longer pose a threat to the community, parole should remain a possibility.

CO-SPONSOR & VOTE YES FOR HB 475 AND SB 166