

Human Rights Watch

Children's Rights

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/05/20/write-louisiana-legislature-end-juvenile-executions>

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The Louisiana House of Representatives is considering a bill to end juvenile executions. Use this example letter, or draft one in your own words, to send to your representative urging him or her to support this important bill.

Click [here](#) to find out who your Representative is in the Louisiana House of Representatives.

Dear Representative,

As my elected representative to the Louisiana House of Representatives, I urge you to vote yes for HB 783, which would end Louisianas executions of people under the age of 18 at the time of the crime.

In March, South Dakota and Wyoming passed legislation that forbids the execution of offenders who were 17 or younger at the age when they committed their crime and the New Hampshire legislature just passed a similar bill that now awaits the governors signature. Louisiana now has the opportunity to join the ranks of states that have ended this practice and it should act decisively to protect the rights of children, even as it acts to ensure appropriate punishment for child offenders.

The death penalty for juvenile offenders has been abandoned by countries all over the world. International treaties and customary international law forbid capital punishment for offenders under the age of 18 at the time of the offense for which they were convicted. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo are the only other countries that are known to defy the worldwide consensus that the death penalty should not be imposed on child offenders.

The death penalty is a form of punishment unique in its cruelty and is inevitably carried out in an arbitrary manner, inflicted primarily on the most vulnerable the poor, the mentally ill, and persons of color. The intrinsic fallibility of all criminal justice systems assures that even when full due process of law is respected, innocent persons may be executed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)

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