

The Sentencing Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/the-lives-of-juvenile-lifers-findings-from-a-national-survey/>

Policy Issue Resources

1705 DeSales St, NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.628.0871
(fax) 202.628.1091
staff@sentencingproject.org

1705 DeSales St, NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.628.0871
(fax) 202.628.1091
staff@sentencingproject.org

Sentences of life without parole are often erroneously believed to translate to a handful of years in prison followed by inevitable release. The reality is that a life without parole sentence means that the individual will die in prison.

This report provides a new perspective on the population of individuals serving life sentences without parole for crimes committed in their youth. It represents the findings of a comprehensive investigation into this population that includes a first-ever national survey of juvenile lifers. Through this effort we obtained in-depth information from these individuals about their life experiences prior to their conviction, as well as descriptions of their lives while incarcerated. The findings are sobering, and should become an element of policy discussion regarding this extreme punishment.

Although it does not excuse their crimes, most people sent to prison for life as youth were failed by systems that are intended to protect children. Survey findings from 1,579 individuals around the country who are serving these sentences demonstrate high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage, extreme racial disparities in the imposition of these punishments, sentences frequently imposed without judicial discretion, and counterproductive corrections policies that thwart efforts at rehabilitation.

To read the report, download the PDF below.

Latinx men born in 2001 can expect to go to prison in their lifetime

Sentencing Policy

1705 DeSales St, NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.628.0871
(fax) 202.628.1091
staff@sentencingproject.org

The Sentencing Project (EIN 52-1472546) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Copyright 2022 The Sentencing Project All Rights Reserved [Terms of Use](#) // [Privacy Policy](#)