

# The Sentencing Project

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/juvenile-life-without-parole-trends-in-sentence-over-time/>**

## Policy Issue Resources

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A growing body of research points to evidence that youth are cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally different from adults in ways that make a sentence of life without parole entirely inappropriate for this segment of our population.

The federal government and most states allow life without parole sentences for juvenile offenders who commit certain crimes. JLWOP is not permitted in 6 states, and it is allowed but not currently used in an additional 9 states. Seventy-three of the individuals serving JLWOP sentences were age 14 or younger at the time of their offense.

This fact sheet discusses the annual use of JLWOP sentences since the 1950s, provides background information on the mechanisms that permit JLWOP sentences to be imposed, and analyses their spike in popularity during the 1990s.

The PDF is available for download below.

People in prison is serving a life sentence

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