

injury to the person and to the public.”¹⁴² In *Kennedy v. Louisiana*, the Court found that both “evolving standards of decency” and “a national consensus” preclude the death penalty for a person who rapes a child.¹⁴³

Applying the *Coker* analysis, the Court ruled in *Enmund v. Florida*¹⁴⁴ that death is an unconstitutional penalty for felony murder if the defendant did not himself kill, or attempt to take life, or intend that anyone be killed. Although a few more states imposed capital punishment in felony murder cases than had imposed it for rape, nonetheless the weight was heavily against the practice, and the evidence of jury decisions and other indicia of a modern consensus also opposed the death penalty in such circumstances. Moreover, the Court determined that death was a disproportionate sentence for one who neither took life nor intended to do so. Because the death penalty is likely to deter only when murder is the result of premeditation and deliberation, and because the justification of retribution depends upon the degree of the defendant’s culpability, the imposition of death upon one who participates in a crime in which a victim is murdered by one of his confederates and not as a result of his own intention serves neither of the purposes underlying the penalty.¹⁴⁵ In *Tison v. Arizona*, however, the Court eased the “intent to kill” requirement, holding that, in keeping with an “apparent consensus” among the states, “major participation in the

¹⁴² 433 U.S. at 598.

¹⁴³ 128 S. Ct. 2641, 2649, 2653 (2008). The Court noted that, since *Gregg*, it had “spent more than 32 years articulating limiting factors that channel the jury’s discretion to avoid the death penalty’s arbitrary imposition in the case of capital murder. Though that practice remains sound, beginning the same process for crimes for which no one has been executed in more than 40 years would require experimentation in an area where a failed experiment would result in the execution of individuals undeserving of the death penalty. Evolving standards of decency are difficult to reconcile with a regime that seeks to expand the death penalty to an area where standards to confine its use are indefinite and obscure.” *Id.* at 2661.

¹⁴⁴ 458 U.S. 782 (1982). Justice White wrote the opinion of the Court and was joined by Justices Brennan, Marshall, Blackmun, and Stevens. Justice O’Connor, with Justices Powell and Rehnquist and Chief Justice Burger, dissented. *Id.* at 801. *Accord*, *Cabana v. Bullock*, 474 U.S. 376 (1986) (also holding that the proper remedy in a *habeas* case is to remand for state court determination as to whether *Enmund* findings have been made).

¹⁴⁵ Justice O’Connor thought the evidence of contemporary standards did not support a finding that capital punishment was not appropriate in felony murder situations. 458 U.S. at 816–23. She also objected to finding the penalty disproportionate, first because of the degree of participation of the defendant in the underlying crime, *id.* at 823–26, but also because the Court appeared to be constitutionalizing a standard of intent required under state law.