

THE COALITION FOR THE FAIR SENTENCING OF CHILDREN

MEDIA CONTACT:

Rachel Hoffman
Rachel.Hoffman@northwestern.edu

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MEDIA ADVISORY

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT RULING: 'MILLER V. ALABAMA IS RETROACTIVE'

The Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children lauds decision applying landmark Supreme Court ruling ending mandatory juvenile life without parole sentences.

CHICAGO --- The Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children, which is housed at the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern University School of Law, welcomed today's Illinois Supreme Court decision in *People v. Addolfo Davis* as a crucial step toward justice for individuals currently serving mandatory juvenile life without parole sentences in Illinois.

Davis was sentenced for his role as an accomplice for an offense that occurred when he was 14 years old. Due to the mandatory nature of the sentence, individuals like Davis were denied the opportunity at the time of sentencing to show their incredible capacity for change.

"Today's decision is a confirmation that here, in the home of the first juvenile court in the country, we believe that, whether an individual was sentenced today, yesterday, or 20 years ago, judges should have the ability to consider a child's unique capacity to change and become rehabilitated," said Shobha Mahadev, who directs the Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children and represents several individuals serving juvenile life sentences.

Today's decision holds the U.S. Supreme Court's 2012 ruling in *Miller v. Alabama*, making mandatory juvenile life parole sentences unconstitutional, retroactive. In *Miller*, the Supreme Court ruled that children who were under the age of 18 at the time of their offenses could not receive a sentence of life without parole without individualized consideration of their youth and specific circumstances.

The decision in *Davis* means that these individuals—whose sentences were imposed without any opportunity to consider their youth, background, or even the particular circumstances of the offense—will have the opportunity to be

resentenced. Re-sentencing hearings will allow for judges to give individual consideration to all of those currently serving mandatory juvenile life without parole sentences.

“On behalf of myself and all of the family members, we are thankful for the Supreme Court decision,” said Julie Anderson, mother of a son serving a juvenile life without parole sentence and founder of Communities and Relatives of Illinois Incarcerated Children. “[Today’s ruling] may allow our children to have a chance at a review, and that [means] our children may not have to die in prison.”