National

► There are currently 2,484 individuals in the United States serving life sentences without parole for committing crimes when they were under 18 years old.

► Of these 2,484 juveniles, 97.4% are male and 60% are African American.

► 82% of juveniles tried as adults in the U.S. are children of color.

► 59% of juveniles sentenced to life without parole had no prior convictions.

► 26% of juvenile lifers were convicted of felony murder, which is a non-homicide felony where the juvenile is held responsible when a co-defendant commits murder.

► No other country in the world convicts juveniles to a life sentence without parole.

► U.S. sentencing of juvenile lifers violates three United Nations’ resolutions: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and The Convention on the Rights of the Child. The U.S. and Somalia are the only two countries in the world that have not ratified this document.

► Juveniles serving life sentences are at greater risk of being raped, murdered and assaulted, or committing suicide while in prison.

► Forty-four (44) states in the U.S. have provisions to sentence juveniles to life without parole; six of those 44 have no known juvenile lifers. Six states and the District of Columbia do not impose life without parole for juveniles. Of the six, Kansas and Oregon, as well as the District of Colombia prohibit sentencing juveniles to life without parole. Alaska, Colorado, Kentucky and New Mexico allow juveniles serving life sentences to apply for parole after serving a set number of years.

► In Roper v. Simmons 2005, the United States Supreme Court ruled the death penalty as unconstitutional for offenders sentenced for crimes committed as juveniles, citing the many differences between adolescent and adult offenders.

► Recent neurological research shows that adolescents are physiologically and developmentally more susceptible to peer pressure, less able to exhibit self-control, and less able to make decisions based on the results of their actions.

Pennsylvania

► As of October 2008, Pennsylvania houses 4,547 individuals serving life sentences without chance of parole.

► Ten percent, or 444, of Pennsylvania’s lifers are juveniles; Pennsylvania has more juvenile lifers than any other state.

► Pennsylvania is one of 13 states that can apply a life sentence without parole with no minimum age requirement.

► Pennsylvania has mandatory minimum sentencing of life without parole for individuals convicted of first and second degree murder.

► There are 22 times more African Americans than white juvenile lifers in Pennsylvania, and African American youth were sentenced to life without parole for murder 1.48 times more often than white youth.

► Seventy percent (70%), or 308, juvenile lifers in Pennsylvania are African American, 20% (90) are white and 9% (42) are Latino.