



JIMMY CARTER

9/24/2012

To Governor Jerry Brown

We are writing about a subject with which we realize you are fully familiar, but we want to encourage you to support Senate Bill 9, the Fair Sentencing for Youth Act. We were troubled to learn that nearly 2500 inmates currently serving life without parole in the U.S. were juveniles at the time of their offense. This practice is prohibited by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We were therefore relieved that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Miller vs. Alabama* and *Jackson vs. Hobbs* that a mandatory sentence of life without parole for juveniles violates the Eighth Amendment. The challenge now falls to the states to implement the ruling, and California legislators have offered the way forward through SB 9.

Young people are obviously capable of committing serious crimes and we firmly believe that they should be held accountable for their actions. As grandparents, parents, and teachers, we also know that children are unique in the degree of culpability and their capacity for growth and change. Senate Bill 9 recognizes the emotional and psychological differences between children and adults, and provides the opportunity for young people to seek rehabilitation and to mature beyond their teenage years while ensuring that public safety concerns remain a top priority.

We urge you to sign Senate Bill 9 because all children child, even those who make grave mistakes, deserve an opportunity to fulfill their potential as human beings.

Sincerely, and with best wishes,

*Jimmy Carter* *Rosalynn Carter*