

# Fast Facts

## About life without parole for youth:

- As people of faith, we are called to recognize and work on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society—especially our children.
- There are 2,500 youth serving life without the possibility of parole in the United States. There are none in the rest of the world.
- Life without parole is a sentence to die in prison. There is no hope of ever being released.
- Sentencing youth to life without the possibility of parole sends an unmistakable message that they are beyond redemption.
- Our nation's highest court has held three times in the last three years that child status is relevant to matters of justice and the law. The message that "kids are different" has been established by the Court.
- The United States and Somalia are the only two countries in the world that have not ratified the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which prohibits sentencing youth to life without parole.
- Evidence from behavioral and child development research concludes that young people who commit crimes are more likely to reform their behavior and have a better chance at rehabilitation than adults.
- Incarcerating a youth for life costs taxpayers an estimated \$2 million per prisoner.
- On average across the country, black youth are serving life without parole at a per capita rate that is 10 times that of white youth.
- An estimated 59 percent of people serving life without parole sentences for crimes committed as youth received the sentence for their first-ever offense