

NEWS RELEASE

# Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Page 1 of 1

## STATEMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL LUTHER STRANGE

### *Regarding Supreme Court Ruling about Life-without-Parole for Juveniles*

Today, in *Miller v. Alabama*, a 5-4 majority of the United States Supreme Court held that the Constitution prevents the States from imposing mandatory life-without-parole sentences on murderers who commit their crimes when they are under the age of 18. We respect the Court and will of course follow its decision, but we profoundly disagree with its reasoning and result.

It is rare that a juvenile commits the worst kind of murder. But when this happens, the Alabama Legislature and most other American legislatures have determined that the appropriate sentence is life without parole. And they have made that sentence mandatory. Thus, it is hard to understand the Court's ruling that this sentencing procedure is "unusual" for the purposes of the Eighth Amendment.

But we are pleased that the Court rejected Mr. Miller's broader argument that juvenile murderers can never receive life without parole. The Court instead affirmed the right of States to sentence the worst offenders to life-without-parole regardless of their age, as long as the sentence is not mandatory. For this reason, we anticipate that the Court's decision will cause less of a disruption in Alabama's system than the one Miller had sought. Miller will have a new sentencing hearing, but in light of the facts of his case, the prosecution will have a compelling argument that he should receive a life-without-parole sentence. This decision should not affect the other juveniles serving this sentence either, especially if their convictions and sentences are already final. Going forward, these sentences will no longer be mandatory, but prosecutors will be able to seek this sentence in appropriate cases.

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