

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2016

For More Information, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Page 1 of 1

AG STRANGE COMMENTS ON U.S. SUPREME COURT ACTION IN CASES OF JUVENILES SENTENCED TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

(MONDAY)--Today, the U.S. Supreme Court remanded seven Alabama cases to the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals for reconsideration in light of *Montgomery v. Louisiana*. In *Montgomery*, the high court held that its ruling in *Miller v. Alabama* barring mandatory life without parole for juvenile offenders applied retroactively. The seven cases remanded today involved juveniles who had their death sentences reduced to life without parole following the Supreme Court's decision in *Roper v. Simmons*, which held the sentence of death unconstitutional for murderers who were under 18 at the time of their crimes.

Today's action by the Supreme Court included clarification by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito as to the scope of *Montgomery*. In a concurrence, the Justices explained that the Court was not addressing the merits of these cases or taking a position on whether life without parole is an appropriate sentence in each. Because these defendants previously received a death sentence, each also received a hearing providing him an opportunity to present his age and any other mitigating circumstances to the sentencer. The Justices explained that courts are free to consider on remand whether these previous hearings satisfy the individual sentencing requirement of *Miller*.

Attorney General Strange again stated his objection to the Court's ruling in *Montgomery*, which potentially allows about 70 convicted murderers in Alabama to receive new sentences because they were juveniles at the time they committed their crimes.

"It would be reprehensible to put victims' families through the ordeal of seeing the person responsible for the deaths of their loved ones allowed to potentially receive a new sentence. This could have a devastating effect on families who thought they had received closure in cases often going back decades. Thankfully, members of the Court today recognized that these cases – in which the death penalty had first been imposed – have already undergone extensive reviews that would have considered the defendants' ages and any mitigating circumstances. The courts should take those proceedings into consideration before requiring victims' families to endure new sentencing hearings or new sentences for these murderers."

The defendants in whose cases the Court acted today are William Knotts, James Bonds, Nathan Slaton, Clayton Flowers, Michael S. Barnes (who had two cases), and Renaldo Chante Adams.

--30--



501 Washington Avenue • Montgomery, AL 36104 • (334) 242-7300
www.ago.state.al.us