



MDOC via AP

This combination of photos provided by the Michigan Department of Corrections shows Chester Lee Patterson in 1971 and in Aug. 8, 2015. Patterson has been behind bars for 45 years. At 17, he fatally shot a store clerk during a robbery. He got life with the possibility of parole after 10 years. Patterson has earned degrees, completed a substance-abuse program, worked in the library, and avoided disciplinary tickets. He's also been denied parole at least five times, according to records.

Locked up for life

High court juvenile lifer ban spurs wider review of cases

By JULIET LINDERMAN
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A U.S. Supreme Court decision triggering new sentences for inmates serving mandatory life without parole for crimes committed as juveniles has had a far greater effect: The ruling is prompting lawyers to apply its fundamental logic — that it's cruel and unusual to lock teens up for life — to a larger population, those whose sentences include a parole provision but who stand little chance of getting out.

The court in January 2016 expanded its ban on mandatory life without parole for juveniles to more than 2,000 offenders already serving such sentences, saying teens should be treated differently than adult offenders because they're less mature, prone to manipulation and capable of change. The court found that all but the rare juvenile lifer whose crime reflects "permanent incorrigibility" should have a chance to argue for freedom one day, and dozens serving mandatory terms have since been resentenced and released.

But legal challenges are also being argued on behalf of offenders sentenced to life with parole for crimes they committed as teens — a population totaling some 7,300 inmates nationwide, according to Ashley Nellis at advocacy group The Sentencing Project. "Even states that do have parole, it doesn't give a lot of reason for hope," Nellis said. "The Supreme Court was very clear to say that age-related factors need to be considered at resentencing or parole review, but the feedback we're seeing is that those factors aren't being considered."

Other courts are applying the 2016 ruling to those whose life-without-parole sentences weren't mandatory or were negotiated as part of a plea deal. In Florida, more than 600 inmates are potentially eligible for new sentences because court decisions there require a new look at anyone serving life for crimes committed as minors — even if their sentences were optional or included the possibility of parole.

The Supreme Court has not ruled on these other circum-

stances, but some state courts have. In January, New Jersey's Supreme Court ordered new sentences for two former teen offenders with de facto life terms. One was serving 110 years, with parole eligibility after 55 years; the other had 75 years, with parole eligibility after serving 68. The court noted both defendants would "likely serve more time in jail than an adult sentenced to actual life without parole."

The number of years inmates must serve before parole eligibility varies by offense and state: In Tennessee, a lifer must serve

century, and the parole board is still saying no."

His case isn't unique. In Florida, a state Supreme Court ruling last year said that juvenile offenders who were eligible for parole must be resentenced to ensure they have a real opportunity for release. The ruling came in the case of Angelo Atwell, who got life with the possibility of parole after 25 years for a murder he committed in 1990 at age 16. When it came time for Atwell to argue for his freedom, the state calculated his presumptive release date as 2130 — 140 years after

the standard when he declared in 1995 that "life means life," says the system he designed is dysfunctional.

"What happens with lifers now, I had some responsibility. And I say that not with pride, but with regret," Glendening told the AP. "What we're finding now is people who are juveniles ... they are now aging in prison, are probably a threat to no one at this stage. It's a question of humane treatment: Is it humane or cruel and unusual to have someone sitting in jail at 50, 60, 70 for an offense committed half a century ago?"

"I am not the same 17-year-old kid. I will never commit another crime again."

— Chester Lee Patterson, serving life sentence in Michigan for murder

51 years. In Texas, 40. Lifers could qualify for a hearing after 10 years in Michigan, but that doesn't mean they'll get one. In 44 states, parole boards are appointed by governors, and review processes vary greatly. Some boards review prisoner files without in-person interviews. Some states specify factors to consider; others allow significant discretion.

If a prisoner is denied, he'll likely wait several years for another chance and sometimes isn't told why.

Chester Patterson, 63, has been behind bars for 45 years in Michigan. At 17, he fatally shot a store clerk during a robbery. He got life with the possibility of parole after 10 years. Patterson has earned degrees, completed a substance-abuse program, worked in the library, and avoided disciplinary tickets. He's also been denied parole at least five times, according to records. Each time, the board sends a notice that says, "no interest." He's awaiting a decision after his most recent hearing in April.

"I am not that same 17-year-old kid. I will never commit another crime again," Patterson wrote to The Associated Press. "I caused a terrible tragedy for which I will always be sorry and shameful. What more can I say to the family? I have been here for almost a half of a

sentencing.

"While technically Atwell is parole eligible, it is a virtual certainty that Atwell will spend the rest of his life in prison," the justices wrote, and his sentence, "virtually indistinguishable from a sentence of life without parole, is therefore unconstitutional."

Atwell awaits a new sentencing hearing.

Iowa's highest court in 2013 found that the governor didn't comply with the U.S. Supreme Court when he commuted the life-without-parole sentences of 38 juveniles to life with the possibility of parole after 60 years, because they wouldn't be eligible until they surpass their life expectancy. "Oftentimes, it is important that the spirit of the law not be lost in the application," the court wrote.

More legal challenges have been filed in North Carolina, Illinois and Missouri, among other states.

Maryland, Oklahoma and California are the only three states that require the governor to sign off on parole recommendations for lifers. Last year the American Civil Liberties Union sued Maryland, arguing that a life-with-parole sentence doesn't afford prisoners a meaningful shot at release because governors for two decades haven't approved any petitions. Even Parris Glendening, the former Maryland governor who set

Maryland's parole commission in October began reviewing all 271 lifers who committed crimes as juveniles, according to commission chairman David Blumberg. As of May, the commission had reviewed 76 cases: 45 have been scheduled for additional hearings, 20 were referred for psychological risk assessments, and nine were refused parole. Two asked for postponements. None has been released.

Gov. Larry Hogan said he and his team take the process seriously.

"They meet with the inmate. ... They talk with the victim's families and witnesses and spend months and months," he said. "And in a few cases I was convinced that people had served their debt to society and deserved a second chance, and several of them were people that were convicted at a very young age and had served long, long sentences and had been model prisoners and really rehabilitated themselves."

But Hogan hasn't approved any parole bids for juvenile lifers. The commission, on average, has recommended fewer than two prisoners serving life sentences for parole per year since 1995, according to public defender James Johnston, who says the state's system contravenes the essence of the Supreme Court rulings.

Sessions' pot fury not echoed by task force

WASHINGTON (AP) — The betting was that law-and-order Attorney General Jeff Sessions would come out against the legalized marijuana industry with guns blazing. But the task force Sessions assembled to find the best legal strategy is giving him no ammunition, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, a group of prosecutors and federal law enforcement officials, has come up with no new policy recommendations to advance the attorney general's aggressively anti-marijuana views. The group's report largely reiterates the current Justice Department policy on marijuana.

It encourages officials to keep studying whether to change or rescind the Obama administration's more hands-off approach

to enforcement — a stance that has allowed the nation's experiment with legal pot to flourish.

Sessions, who has assailed marijuana as comparable to heroin and blamed it for spikes in violence, has been promising to reconsider existing pot policy since he took office six months ago. His statements have sparked both support and worry across the political spectrum as a growing number of states have worked to legalize the drug.

Threats of a federal crackdown have united liberals, who object to the human costs of a war on pot, and some conservatives, who see it as a states' rights issue. Some advocates and members of Congress had feared the task force's recommendations would give Sessions the green light to begin dismantling a multi-million-dollar pot industry.

- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY -
Administrative Support / Inside Sales

Great work environment. Super awesome team. Good base pay PLUS commissions. Retirement plan. Weekends off. Interested?

We are looking for a motivated, confident individual to join our team at East Oregonian in Pendleton. This full-time position will do inside sales and provide administrative support to the advertising director and publisher.

No media or sales experience? No problem, as long as you understand the importance of great customer service, working hard and a desire to enjoy your job.

Could this be you?

Benefits include Paid Time Off (PTO) and 401(k)/Roth 401(k) retirement plan. Send resume and letter of interest to EO Media Group, PO Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308-2048 or e-mail hr@eomediagroup.com

Come work with us!
We are an awesome team.

Send resume and letter of interest to
EO Media Group,
PO Box 2048 • Salem, OR 97308-2048,
by fax to **503-371-2935**
or e-mail hr@eomediagroup.com

EAST OREGONIAN

Come work with us! We are an awesome team.



McKay Creek Estates

Caregiver SUPPORT

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

Do you wish you had this book?
"Be The Best Caregiver & Feel Fantastic Doing It"

Although this book hasn't been written, we understand the caregiver journey can be stressful and challenging. Our aim is to provide some clarity and support to caregivers helping seniors. Finding the right information enables compassionate support and advocacy for a friend or loved one.

You are invited to attend a FREE monthly educational series featuring experts and professionals who provide support to families and who are advocates for seniors and their care.

Thursday, May 18th at 2:00 p.m.
Brain Fitness for Seniors
Brain exercises are important to keep the mind sharp. It is important to encourage memory exercises when you are a senior caregiver. Asking your loved one to share a favorite memory or stories about their lives can bring them joy, strengthen their memory and increase their brain function. Learn about a variety of techniques you can use to encourage brain fitness.

Thursday, June 15th at 2:00 p.m.
Managing Chronic Conditions
Self-management support provides tools to improve health. In the U.S., statistics reveal that one in four seniors over the age of 65 are challenged with managing one or more chronic medical conditions. Self-management support tools can help you and your loved one better understand how to manage their illness day-to-day and encourage them to take an active role in their health care.

Thursday, July 20th at 2:00 p.m.
Senior Finances, How to Help
Employ strategies to protect the finances of your loved ones. As our parents and loved ones age they may lose the ability to fully track their finances. When seniors are unable to manage their daily finances they may become susceptible to financial abuse, lose their home or risk having their utilities turned off. Learn how you can make arrangements for financial assistance to protect your loved one.

Thursday, August 17th at 2:00 p.m.
Effectively Manage Chronic Pain
Pain management is a crucial component to caring for seniors. As a caregiver, it can be difficult to know how to help a senior minimize and manage chronic pain. Older adults often encounter chronic pain as their muscles and joints become stiff and they become less agile. We'll provide tips to understand the various medications used to treat pain and potential side effects.

Location: Classes are held at St. Anthony Hospital, conference room #1: 2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801

McKay Creek Estates
1601 Southgate Place
Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 276-1987

Prestige Senior Living, L.L.C.
www.PrestigeCare.com

Discretion and Comfort that's ready-to-wear.

Silk™
from Signia

- Discreet, nearly invisible solution for your hearing loss
- Available in three sizes to fit any ear comfortably
- Custom fit without the wait

Clinically proven better than normal hearing with less effort.*

2237 Southwest • Court Place
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-276-5053

ANDERSON
RENA
MA, CCGA

* Study conducted at the University of Northern Colorado, 2015, examined the effectiveness of the new features of primax by collecting and analyzing ongoing EEG data while subjects performed speech testing. For both primax features SpeechMaster and EchoShield, the objective brain behavior measures revealed a significant reduction in listening effort when the feature was activated.
Copyright © 2016 Sivantos, Inc. All rights reserved. Sivantos, Inc. is a Trademark Licensee of Siemens AG. 9/16 SI/17076A