

## CHILDREN ARE TO BE SENTENCED AS CHILDREN

Recently the Washington State Supreme Court ordered the re-sentencing of two boys who were 16 and 17 years old at the time they committed crimes but were tried and sentenced as adults. The boys had met friends on Halloween 2012. They drank Vodka and smoked pot. Later they used hockey masks and a handgun to take candy and cell phones from trick-or-treaters in the Tacoma area. They were found guilty after trial and received sentences in excess of thirty years in prison.

The Supreme Court upheld the conviction but ordered new sentencing. The Justices said the Sentencing Judge should have taken into account the boys ages, "because children are different under the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment".

The Policy Director for the Washington Youth Division of the American Civil Liberties Union praised the ruling saying that children should not automatically be treated like adults. However, the decision was highly criticized by Prosecutors throughout the State.

Chuck praises the decision and is a proponent of the position that children should be sentenced differently even if they are tried as adults. Chuck is working with others to attempt to change the law that treat juvenile criminal offenders as adults and face adult penalties - even though the crimes are committed when they were children.

Chuck will continue to advise you of important Supreme Court Decisions as they are rendered.