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## The Supreme Court Rules that the Constitution Forbids Death Penalty for Juveniles

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WilmerHale won a major victory today in the Supreme Court in *Roper v. Simmons*. The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the death penalty "is a disproportionate punishment for juveniles," and that it violates the Eighth Amendment to impose a death sentence on a youthful murderer who committed the crime before age 18. The court went on to say that "our society views juveniles...as categorically less culpable than the average criminal."

The firm (along with co-counsel Jennifer Herndon) represented the respondent, Christopher Simmons, who received the death penalty for a crime committed at age 17. [Seth Waxman](#) argued the case in the Supreme Court, and David Ogden and [Danielle Spinelli](#) were on the brief.