

08-7621 SULLIVAN V. FLORIDA

DECISION BELOW: 1D07-6433

LOWER COURT CASE NUMBER: 1D07-6433

QUESTION PRESENTED:

Joe Sullivan is serving a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for a non-homicide offense committed when he was thirteen years old. Nationwide, only one other thirteen-year-old child has received a life-without-parole sentence for a non-homicide. The questions presented are:

1. Does imposition of a life-without-parole sentence on a thirteen-year-old for a non-homicide violate the prohibition on cruel and unusual punishments under the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments, where the freakishly rare imposition of such a sentence reflects a national consensus on the reduced criminal culpability of children?
2. Given the extreme rarity of a life imprisonment without parole sentence imposed on a 13-year-old child for a non-homicide and the unavailability of substantive review in any other federal court, should this Court grant review of a recently evolved Eighth Amendment claim where the state court has refused to do so?

CERT. GRANTED 5/4/2009