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STATEMENT OF MISSOURI'S PROSECUTORS IN RESPONSE TO SUPREME COURT RULING REGARDING SENTENCES FOR FIRST-DEGREE MURDER

Yesterday's decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Montgomery v. Louisiana* underscores the urgent need for the General Assembly to close a giant hole in Missouri law. For more than three years, Missouri has not had a constitutional sentencing scheme for those who commit first degree murder while under the age of 18. Make no mistake, these people are killers and must be treated as such. The Supreme Court has told us that these murderers can be sentenced to life without parole, but only if the jury also has another sentencing option. Nothing in yesterday's ruling changes that. Now, the legislature needs to act. After yesterday's ruling, Missouri can offer parole hearings at the appropriate time for those convicted murderers who were under age 18 to see if they deserve to be released. Missouri's prosecutors will continue to work with the legislature to find a solution that brings justice in these horrific crimes.

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