

U.S. Supreme Court limits legal options for death row prisoners

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Washington, May 24 (RHC)-- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that two condemned prisoners in the state of Arizona cannot present new evidence in federal court that could prove they didn't receive adequate legal representation, leading to their convictions and death sentences.

The case involves David Martinez Ramirez and Barry Lee Jones, who say their lawyers failed to present evidence that could have exonerated them. Writing for the court's 6-3 conservative majority, Justice Clarence Thomas ruled that "serial relitigation of final convictions undermines the finality that 'is essential to both the retributive and deterrent functions of criminal law.'"

Critics say the ruling will prevent people wrongfully convicted of crimes from proving their innocence. In a scathing dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor called the decision "perverse" and "illogical." She wrote: "Two men whose trial attorneys did not provide even the bare minimum level of representation required by the Constitution may be executed because forces outside of their control prevented them from vindicating their constitutional right to counsel."

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