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(Neb.)- Lawmakers Advance Neb. Juvenile Sentencing Bill



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 04/11/2013 10:52 AM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Juveniles convicted of first-degree murder in Nebraska would face a minimum 40-year prison sentence, under a bill that won initial approval from lawmakers.

Lawmakers voted 30-2 on Thursday to advance the bill, following more than eight hours of debate. The 40-to-life sentencing range represented a compromise between lawmakers who supported a 30-year minimum sentence and others who pushed for at least 60 years.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Brad Ashford, says the 40-to-life range will give judges leeway to consider mitigating factors, such as a juvenile's maturity and efforts toward rehabilitation.

Sen. Ernie Chambers says he felt "a great sense of displeasure" about the 40-to-life range, which he opposes. But on Tuesday, he withdrew his motion to kill the bill, which allowed the vote to proceed.