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# KOB-TV interviews Kastenberg on a juvenile tried for murder and the death penalty

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## Legal expert says 17-year-old murder suspect cannot face death penalty

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Most of the proceedings surrounding [the case of 17-year-old Xavier Zamora](#) will likely be kept hidden from the public, according to a legal expert at UNM.

**By Joy Wang**

**KOB-TV**  
**April 26, 2019**

UNM Law School professor Joshua Kastenbergs expects Zamora will be a juvenile tried as an adult for the murder of a federal employee. He said that there was a similar case in 2010 in which a juvenile murdered a federal employee.

"I have to make the assumption that policy has not changed under Attorney General William Barr with a new presidential administration, Kastenbergs said.

"Adults can be sentenced to death or life without parole," he said. "Juveniles tried as adults cannot be sentenced to death or life without parole."

From looking at other cases and looking at the circumstances around this one, Kastenbergs said Zamora likely won't see a life sentence.

"This is not premeditated murder from what I understand," he said. "He could be facing upwards of life with the possibility of parole and all likelihood similar cases, it seems like offenders are sentenced to about 25 years."

Either way, Kastenbergs said the process will be daunting for Zamora and his family.

"There's going to be a case called United States vs. Zamora," he said. "If he's convicted of the murder of a federal employee, that is the brand that will be on him for life."

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