The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling sweeping away a major obstacle to capital punishment may affect as many as 12 Louisiana death-row inmates.

Many condemned murderers nationwide had received delays in execution while the Supreme Court decided whether it was fair to exclude people from juries who opposed the death penalty.

"It's not unexpected," said Martha Kegel, director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Louisiana. "I think it's fundamentally wrong."

"It would have been a major overhaul of the system, but it needed to be done," she said.

A staff member of the 5th Circuit said 12 death-row inmates in Louisiana have raised the death-qualification issue in the federal court appeals. All the inmates have raised other issues as well, he said.

Those who have raised the issue in their appeals are:

- Benjamin Berry, sentenced to death for the 1978 murder of a Jefferson Parish deputy sheriff during a bank robbery. Berry's sentence was affirmed by the 5th Circuit but the case is pending a decision by the Supreme Court whether to hear his case.
- Willie Celestine, sentenced to die for the murder of an elderly woman in Lafayette Parish. The 5th Circuit dismissed his appeal in September and Celestine awaits a decision by the Supreme Court whether to hear his case.
- Wayne Felde, sentenced to die for the 1978 murder of a Shreveport police officer. Felde's case is pending before the 5th Circuit.
- Jimmy Glass, sentenced to die for the murders of a Webster Parish couple after he escaped from jail. The Glass case is pending before the 5th Circuit.
- Jimmy Wingo, an accomplice of Glass, was also sentenced to death. His appeal has been denied by the 5th Circuit.
- Antonio James, sentenced to die for a 1979 New Orleans murder. James' appeal is pending before the U.S. District Court in New Orleans.
- Alvin Moore, sentenced to die for the rape-murder of a Bossier City housewife. Moore's appeal is pending before the U.S. District Court in New Orleans.
- Robert Sawyer, sentenced to death for the 1979 murder of a 22-year-old woman in Jefferson Parish in which he beat, burned and mutilated his victim. Sawyer's execution was delayed by a federal district judge pending Monday's decision.
- Wilby Summit, sentenced to die for a 1982 murder in Lafayette Parish. Summit has an appeal pending before the 5th Circuit.
- Willie Watson, sentenced to death in 1981 for raping, robbing and murdering a woman in St. Charles Parish. Watson is awaiting a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court whether to hear his appeal.
- Herbert Welcome, sentenced to die for a 1981 murder in Iberia Parish. Welcome's case is pending before the 5th Circuit.