



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

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Former Ojai Teacher Pleads Guilty to Sex Crimes Against Student

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Paul Herder (DOB 03/20/58), of Pahoa, Hawaii, pled guilty to six felony counts involving sexual conduct with a student. Herder pled to two counts of luring, digital penetration of a minor, oral copulation of a minor under 18, unlawful sexual intercourse, and using a minor for sex acts. He also admitted special allegations that he took advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit these offenses.

An investigation into Herder began in February 2023, when detectives with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Major Crimes Unit learned of the allegations from a former student who came forward as an adult. The unlawful relationship occurred from 2013 to 2017. During that time, Herder was employed as a teacher at Oak Grove School, in Ojai, and engaged in numerous sexual acts with the underage victim.

In June 2023, detectives located Herder in Hawaii, where coordinated efforts with detectives from the Hawaii Police Department were conducted. Herder was arrested June 12, 2023, and extradited back to Ventura County on July 31, 2023.

Deputy District Attorney Emily Reber, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Unit, prosecuted the case.

"For too long, the defendant had gotten away with the terrible crimes and abuse of trust he perpetrated on the underage victim," Ms. Reber said. "She is finally able to secure the justice and accountability that had escaped her for so many years."

Herder is scheduled to be sentenced on April 29, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 11 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He is expected to be sentenced to 6 years 8 months state prison.

Case: 2023016623

Defendant Information:

Paul Herder (DOB 03/20/58)

Pahoa, Hawaii

Charge pled guilty to:

- (2 counts) PC 288.4(b) – Luring
- PC 289(h) – Anal & genital penetration by foreign object
- PC 288a(b)(1) – Oral copulation of a person under 18
- PC 261.5(c) – Unlawful sexual intercourse
- PC 311.4(c) – Using minor for sex acts

Special Allegation:

- 4.421(a)(11) – The defendant took advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit the offense

