

Department of Human Services

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Oct 25, 1:45 PM EDT

Jurors begin deliberating in Holland murder trial

By DAVID EGGERT
Associated Press Writer

LANSING, Mich. (AP) -- The jury began deliberating Wednesday in the murder trial of Lisa Holland, who is accused of abusing and killing her 7-year-old adopted son.

Before deliberations began, the prosecution and defense made closing arguments.

Ingham County Assistant Prosecutor Michael Ferency urged jurors to convict Holland of first-degree felony murder.

"This was not an accident," he said. "This was something that was done purposefully with the kind of mind that would make someone responsible for murder."

Ferency cited injuries Ricky sustained that are consistent with child abuse and said the boy likely died a slow death from a brain injury caused when Lisa Holland struck him with a hammer.

But defense attorney Andrew Abood told jurors that Lisa Holland's husband, Tim, is a liar who cut a deal with prosecutors and wrongly pinned blame on his wife.

"When is it easier to lie than tell the truth?" Abood asked. "The answer is when you've killed your son."

Lisa Holland, of Williamston, is charged with first-degree child abuse and felony murder in Ricky's 2005 death. Tim Holland led police to the body and pleaded guilty to second-degree murder as part of an agreement to testify against his wife.

Tim Holland, 37, has testified that his 33-year-old wife told him she hit Ricky in the head with a small hammer.

Felony murder is punishable by life in prison without parole, while second-degree murder can bring a life sentence or less and the chance for parole. To convict Lisa Holland of felony murder, prosecutors are trying to prove the death occurred while she committed first-degree child abuse.

Ricky vanished from his Williamston home east of Lansing in July 2005. His adoptive parents said he ran away, sparking a nine-day search by 1,700 volunteers and hundreds of law enforcement officers.

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Volunteers, dive teams and K-9 units had scoured in ever-widening circles. Through it all, Ricky's adoptive parents told searchers and the media that he'd run away.

Abuse may have marred Ricky's years with the Hollands, who became his foster parents in 2000 and adopted him in 2003. But neglect marked his time with his birth parents, whose rights were terminated in 2002, according to court documents.

Medical examiners classified the death as homicide by unspecified means and found fractures to Ricky's upper body and face.

Jury selection in the trial began Sept. 11.

David Eggert can be reached at [deggert\(at\)ap.org](mailto:deggert@ap.org)

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Closing arguments begin in Holland murder trial

10/25/2006, 10:20 a.m. ET

By **DAVID EGGERT**
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Closing arguments began Wednesday morning in the murder trial of Lisa Holland, who is accused of abusing and killing her 7-year-old adopted son.

Holland, of Williamston, is charged with first-degree child abuse and felony murder in Ricky Holland's 2005 death. Her husband, Tim, led police to the body and pleaded guilty to second-degree murder as part of an agreement to testify against his wife.

Tim Holland, 37, has testified that his 33-year-old wife told him she hit Ricky in the head with a small hammer.

Felony murder is punishable by life in prison without parole, while second-degree murder can bring a life sentence or less and the chance for parole. To convict Lisa Holland of felony murder, prosecutors are trying to prove the death occurred while she committed first-degree child abuse.

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David Eggert can be reached at [deggert\(at\)ap.org](mailto:deggert(at)ap.org)

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A happy mother or monster?

Jury sees two portraits of Lisa Holland

BY JACK KRESNAK
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

October 25, 2006

LANSING -- In deciding whether Lisa Holland is guilty of killing her 7-year-old adopted son, Ricky, jurors will consider the testimony of 55 witnesses, 312 pieces of evidence -- and starkly conflicting portraits of the defendant.

Was she the happy mother who sang to her children or lovingly sat and rocked them, as Lisa Holland's ailing 73-year-old mother testified in Ingham County Circuit Court on Tuesday?

Or was she the cruel disciplinarian who duct-taped her son to the refrigerator, shut him in the basement with the bugs he dreaded and regularly bopped him with a large wooden spoon, as Lisa Holland's husband, Tim Holland, has testified?

There have been few clues from Lisa Holland herself over more than five weeks of testimony. In court, the 33-year-old Williamston-area woman usually sits hunched over the defense table, taking reams of notes and occasionally smiling at her attorneys.

She rarely showed any emotion, even when her mother, Betty Taylor of Williamston, was brought in to testify Tuesday in a wheelchair and connected to an oxygen tank. Between gasps for breath, Taylor called her daughter a wonderful mother to Ricky and his four siblings.

"She loved all of her kids, every one of them," Taylor said.

Closing arguments are scheduled for this morning. After receiving instructions on the law from Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Paula Manderfield, the 12-person jury will begin to consider Holland's guilt or innocence on charges of open murder and first-degree child abuse.

Taylor, the final witness, said she learned from news reports that the boy was dead and she and her daughter have never spoken about what happened to Ricky in July 2005.

"I thought he'd run away," Taylor said. "He'd done it before and I thought he'd run away again."

Tim Holland, 37, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the boy's death, testified earlier that he and his wife made up the runaway story as a ruse. He implicated his wife in Ricky's death, saying she later told him she hit Ricky with a small hammer, though Tim Holland admitted that he did nothing to help the boy during the last week of his life. After Ricky's death on July 1, 2005, Tim Holland said he dumped the boy's body in a swamp near Dansville.

The next day, Taylor said she and her daughter were shopping at a fabric store in Lansing when Tim Holland called to say Ricky had run away. On the way to the store, Taylor said Lisa Holland told her she'd asked Ricky to come along but he declined.

Taylor said her daughter appeared upset at the news of Ricky's disappearance, but they finished selecting and paying for the fabrics and Lisa dropped off her mother at home before going to search for the boy.

In the weeks before Ricky's disappearance, Taylor said her daughter seemed to be under stress and controlled by her husband, who wanted household chores done his way. Nearly a dozen times during her testimony, Taylor described Tim Holland as controlling and said he was the family disciplinarian.

Asked whether she knew that Ricky's injuries included a broken facial bone and a broken clavicle, Taylor said, "No, I can't discuss it. It's too painful."

Taylor said her nickname for Ricky was "Mr. Sunshine -- because I loved him so much and he was always smiling."



Lisa Holland, 33, is charged with killing her 7-year-old son, Ricky. (Taylor family photo)

A happy mother or monster?

She described Ricky as a bright child who was "very interested in the dictionary" and in maps when her daughter was homeschooling him. "They were always looking at the maps," Taylor said.

After consulting with an attorney, Lisa's father, Tom Taylor, invoked his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent on Monday. Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency has called Taylor a coconspirator based on Tim Holland's statements that Tom Taylor was present when Ricky allegedly was abused by Lisa Holland.

But Lisa Holland's sister, Jane Gauss, a registered nurse at Lansing's Sparrow Hospital, testified Monday that Lisa and Ricky "seemed to be the happiest when they were together."

Gauss said, "She really enjoyed taking him out and doing things with him."

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As an example, she said Tim would constantly call Lisa's cell phone. "He wanted to know where she was, who she was with ... when she would be home," Taylor told Lisa Holland's co-counsel Mike Nichols.

Taylor also testified her daughter was a loving mother who would sing to her children. The Hollands adopted three of Ricky's younger siblings; they also have a 2-year-old biological daughter.

"She loved all of her children - every single one of them," she said.

Taylor said her nickname for Ricky was "Mr. Sunshine." When asked why, she said, "Because I loved him so much."

Thought he'd run away

Taylor said she believed Ricky was a runaway until she heard on the news that his remains had been found, six months after he was reported missing.

"I thought he'd run away," she told Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency. "He'd done that before."

She said she has never talked to Lisa about what happened.

"Have you asked her hard questions about what she knows about what happened to Ricky?" Ferency asked.

"No, I haven't," Taylor said, adding that she didn't know about fractured bones in the boy's face and shoulder.

Day after Ricky's death

Taylor testified about a trip to Jo-Ann Fabric in the Frandor Shopping Center in Lansing on July 2, 2005, the morning after Ricky reportedly died, according to other testimony.

Taylor said that her daughter told her that she had asked Ricky if he wanted to join them on the trip to the store but he said no.

At the store, Lisa Holland received a cell phone call that Ricky was missing, Taylor said.

Taylor, who was planning to make blankets for some of Tim Holland's relatives, said Lisa was upset, but they waited for an employee to finish cutting material and then paid for it before heading home.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.

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October 25, 2006

Grandma never asked about Ricky

Murder defendant's mother testifies that she did not seek the truth about missing boy.

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

LANSING -- Closing arguments are likely today in the murder trial of Lisa Holland, one day after her mother acknowledged they never spoke about what happened to Holland's 7-year-old foster son after he disappeared.

Appearing frail and using a wheelchair, Betty Taylor testified Tuesday that she never doubted her daughter's claims that Ricky Holland simply ran away from home in July 2005. After the boy turned up dead in a swamp in January, Taylor told jurors she never sought the truth.

"I can't discuss it. It's too painful," said Taylor, 73. "I never did find out from Lisa. It's just so upsetting."

Taylor testified despite a warning from Ingham County Assistant Prosecutor Michael Ferency that she could be charged with perjury if her statements don't jibe with information she told police after Ricky's disappearance.

Breathing with assistance from an oxygen tank, Taylor testified one day after her husband, Tom Taylor, refused to do so. He invoked the Fifth Amendment's right against self-incrimination Monday after Ferency labeled him a "co-conspirator" in the case.

Taylor is the last of six witnesses to testify for Holland, 34, of Williamston, who prosecutors claim abused Ricky for years before killing him with a tack hammer and covering up his disappearance for months. She faces open murder and child abuse charges that could send her to prison for life.

Taylor described Lisa as a loving mother, adored by Ricky and her other children. Taylor said her nickname for the boy was "Mr. Sunshine, because I loved his so much. He was smiley."

On cross-examination, Ferency pinned her down on details of July 2, 2005, when she traveled to a fabrics store to buy material to make blankets, even as Holland's husband, Tim, called 911 to report Ricky missing.

Ferency asked Taylor if she'd also gone to the store the day before, and if so, why she hadn't done all of her shopping then. When Taylor said she hadn't, Ferency produced a copy of a check she wrote to the store on July 1.

Her story changed when Ferency showed Taylor a time stamp on the back of her check made by the cash register.

The grandmother was visibly shaken, and replied "no, no," when Ferency asked her if she knew that Ricky had multiple fractures in his face and a broken shoulder when he was murdered.

After almost 60 witnesses and countless exhibits, the case could go to jurors today. Both sides said they proved their case during the seven-week trial before Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield.

"It's been a very difficult case in the sense that there's an awful lot of parts to it, and we've had a very large crew," Ferency said.

Defense attorney Andrew Abood predicted Holland would be exonerated if the jury considers the evidence, rather than the testimony of her husband, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and testified that Lisa Holland confessed to killing the boy while Tim Holland was buying her a treat.

Both parents blame the other, and Tim is the only witness who directly blamed the death on Lisa. The others testified about a pattern of abuse that may have led to the boy's death.

"Clearly we've shown reasonable doubt with the pinnacle being the testimony of Tim," Abood said. "Anybody who saw that would have a hard time rationalizing his acts, unless he was the principal in committing this heinous crime -- and if that's true they have to find Lisa not guilty."

Lisa Holland declined to testify Tuesday.

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or kbouffard@detnews.com.

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Jury selection begins in custody case for Rose Kelley's siblings

FLINT

04 FJ MLIVEONLY

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

By Paul Janczewski pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

COMMUNITY STAFF WRITER

A civil trial began this morning to determine whether the courts should take custody of the surviving siblings of Rose Kelley, a 5-year-old girl who died in squalor.

Probate Court Judge Robert E. Weiss began jury selection shortly after 10 a.m. today.

Weiss denied a motion from attorneys representing the mother, Michelle L. Bowen, and two fathers of the three children to delay the trial. The attorneys said they did not have the reports from a prosecution expert witness concerning the death of Rose Kelley.

Assistant Genesee County Prosecutor Marcie M. Mabry said "malnutrition, starvation and dehydration do not happen overnight."

Jury selection is expected to last most of the day. It remains unclear if opening statements and testimony will begin later today.

Rose, 5, died June 3 at the family's residence, 1606 N. Franklin Ave., after being sick for five days. She was not taken to a doctor.

Her siblings - a 6-year-old brother, 2-year-old sister and 10-year-old half-sister - were removed from the home and are now in foster care.

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THE DAILY OAKLAND PRESS

Mother faces child abuse charges

Of The Oakland Press

ROCHESTER HILLS - A 30-year-old woman is facing criminal charges after police said her son was whipped with an extension cord and switch and his head was clubbed with a pool cue.

Her sister was charged with trying to prevent police from obtaining evidence of the abuse.

The mother, Latina Weeden, was arraigned from jail via video Tuesday in 52-3 District Court on third-degree child abuse and felonious assault charges. Her bond was set at \$10,000 cash. A broadcast report said a magistrate ordered Weeden to have no contact with her son. It also said Weeden argued against being held on the bond in an effort to save her job.

Weeden's 11-year-old son ran Saturday from their house on Brown Road in Orion Township to a nearby Meijer store and contacted police. He was taken to St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland hospital in Pontiac and placed in protective custody.

The child's aunt, Larita Lewis, tried to prevent deputies from looking for evidence, police said. She was arrested and charged Sunday with resisting and obstructing police. Her bond was set at \$2,500 cash.

Deputies searching the house found the switch, extension cord and pool cue.

"It's sad anytime you see somebody willing to hurt another person," Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said.

"It's upsetting. When you see a child attacked by an adult, it's specially disturbing. It's something we won't tolerate."

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http://www.theoaklandpress.com/stories/102506/loc_2006102535.shtml

Rochester Hills Woman, sister face charges in abuse of boy

An Orion Township woman and her sister face child abuse charges in an incident in which investigators said an 11-year-old boy was whipped with an extension cord, clubbed with a pool cue and choked. The boy's mother, Latina Weeden, 30, is charged in the abuse, and her sister, Larita Lewis, faces charges of resisting and obstructing deputies. Weeden is in the Oakland County Jail in lieu of \$10,000 bond. A preliminary exam is set for Tuesday. Lewis is free on \$2,500 bond.

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Organization: Michigan Department of Human Services**Date:** 10/25/2006

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[Boy Allegedly Abused With Pool Cue, Extension Cord, and Switch](#)

10/25/2006 © Saginaw WNEM (CBS) CH 5

(TV5) -- Two suspects from Oakland County have been arrested in a child abuse case where allegedly a boy was beat with a pool cue, extension cord, and a "switch". All three items were recovered after a search warrant was served.

The suspects Latina Weeden and Larita Lewis are sisters. Latina is the mother of the child that was allegedly abused and is being held on \$10,000 dollars cash bond. Her sister is held on a lesser bond amount of \$2500.

A pre-exam conference is scheduled for October 31st at 8:30am at the 52-3 District Court in Rochester Hills where Judge Lisa Asadoorian will be residing.

Larita has been arraigned on "Resisting and Obstructing" deputies while the search warrant was executed. The sisters are being held in the Oakland County Jail until they post bond. Neither suspect had a prior criminal record.

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Mother sentenced

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

IONIA COUNTY -- A Belding woman on Tuesday was sentenced to prison in the death of her disabled 3-month-old daughter. Amy Jo Nash, 23, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the March 13, 2005, death of her daughter, Janie. Circuit Judge David Hoort ordered her to serve 7 1/2 to 35 years in prison. Nash was accused of intentionally leaving her daughter -- born with spina bifida, which leads to nerve damage and leg paralysis -- face-down on a pillow. Nash confessed to snapping under the pressure of her daughter's medical condition.

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Sentence issued in sex assault case

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

CEDAR SPRINGS -- A former foster parent, paramedic and volunteer firefighter was ordered to serve three to 15 years in prison for a second-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction. A Kent County Circuit Court judge ordered Matthew D. Kendall, 33, of Nelson Township, to the prison term for a March 9 incident in which he gave alcohol to a minor then assaulted the child at his home. The victim was living at his home under his guardianship while the minor's mother received medical treatment. Kendall worked for Cedar Springs Fire Department and Montcalm County Advance Life Support Ambulance. State officials have revoked his foster-home license. He was placed on unpaid leave and has since been fired from his job with the county-run ambulance service, Montcalm Administrator John Berchtold.

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Elba Township teenager pleads guilty to sex offense

LAPEER COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

By James L. Smith

jmsmith@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6365

LAPEER - An Elba Township teenager pleaded guilty Tuesday to a single count of attempted third-degree criminal sexual conduct in a deal that dropped charges in three similar cases.

Anthony Kinsora, 17, a Lapeer West High School student, could face an adult sentence for the crime, even though it occurred when he was underage.

Kinsora could face either sentencing as an adult or juvenile in the case, or Judge Michael P. Higgins could hand down a blended sentence that would allow treatment options as a juvenile while an adult sentence would be suspended.

Kinsora initially was charged with four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, two charges of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of assault with intent to commit sexual penetration.

The assaults were reported by four female classmates, including one who was 13 years old at the time of the assaults between 2003 and 2005.

While the first-degree criminal sexual conduct charges carry a possible maximum life sentence, attempted third-degree criminal sexual conduct has a maximum 5-year sentence.

In testimony earlier this year, the victims said that on separate occasions they were assaulted by Kinsora. In three of the cases the assaults allegedly occurred at his house. The first assault reportedly occurred at the victim's house in the summer of 2003.

The first victim testified she was assaulted in the summer of 2003 at her house when she was 13, when both she and Kinsora were in the eighth grade.

A second victim said she was invited to Kinsora's home in the fall of 2003 and assaulted. The third victim testified she was invited to the home in May 2005, but successfully fought off the attack and left.

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Howell crisis center expands

10/25/2006 © Detroit News

HOWELL -- LACASA, a nonprofit agency aiding victims of abuse, plans to expand its forensic nursing program for sexual assault victims to include children younger than 12.

The existing program for adolescents and adults, which began operating in March 2004, is a 24-hour crisis center with eight on-call registered nurses specially trained in rape counseling, assessment, examination and evidence collection.

It is one of about 20 statewide.

"This is the best and safest environment for a patient and the most appropriate place for a child," said Karen Brewer, supervisor of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program.

So far this year, 46 sexual assault victims older than 12 have used the program, known by its acronym SANE, with about the same number of abused children coming through LACASA's doors who could have benefited from a similar setting.

"We already determined there is a need for a pediatric program in the community," said Judy Shewach, executive director of LACASA, which serves Livingston County but will take anyone in need of its services.

In 2005, the agency conducted about 130 interviews with abused children and 97 of those were sexual assault cases, and about half of the 97 would have been children appropriate for the SANE exam, she said.

So far this year, LACASA has conducted 160 interviews with children brought to the agency for abuse.

"I suspect the number of sexual abuse cases is still very high," Shewach said.

The forensic nurse program is community-based, working collaboratively with LACASA's crisis response team, Saint Joseph Mercy Livingston Hospital, law enforcement, the prosecutor's office and the Department of Human Services.

The Community Foundation for Livingston County recently awarded a \$10,140 grant for the pediatric expansion of the forensic nursing program.

The grant will enable LACASA to develop needed protocols, community collaborative efforts and selective training for the eight registered nurses to become certified for forensic sexual assault examinations on children.

"There are developmental issues, medical issues and it's expensive to be trained for this. It could take two to four years," Brewer said.

In the meantime, LACASA has counseling programs to help children and their families cope with the physical, emotional and developmental issues associated with child sexual assault.

It also has been active in sexual assault prevention and education programs in the county's five school districts and in the community, Shewach said.

"Our goal is to get to the younger kids, elementary- and middle school-age ones. We work primarily with the high schools. The more people know, the more willing they are to talk about the issues. Our goal is to make that happen," Shewach said.

Last year, a video teaching children about "no touching in the bathing suit area" was shown to 85 first-graders.

Some parents were apprehensive at first, but were invited to watch the segment before it was shown.

"In this day and age, kids do need to know that," Shewach said.

You can reach Valerie Olander at (517) 552-5503 or volander@detnews.com.

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Jackson Citizen Patriot

October 25, 2006

Legislator unresponsive

JACKSON -- In Michigan a child who has been sexually abused generally cannot bring an action against their molester once they reach the age of 19. As a result, predators can continue to commit these heinous crimes against children, knowing their victim has no personal recourse beyond the age of 19. This is especially sad considering that the effects of child abuse usually do not appear until adulthood and by that time authorities are reluctant to prosecute these crimes.

House Bill 4467 would provide a deterrent to these crimes and a remedy for child victims by increasing the statute of limitations by 19 years, as many other states have done. This bill was previously co-sponsored and referred to the Judiciary Committee by Mickey Mortimer in 2004. In 2006 Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of the Archdiocese of Detroit rallied support for a similar bill in Ohio (see USA Today, Jan. 12).

For nearly two years now we, along with many other friends, have been writing Rick Baxter asking that he push HB 4467 for vote to the Judiciary Committee where it has been stuck for almost three years. Other representatives have told us that if they received 10 letters from their constituents on a certain issue they would act on it. Rick Baxter has received several times that amount and has done absolutely nothing.

Jackson County needs a legislator who listens to his or her constituency. It needs someone who will passionately protect Michigan's children, not someone who has his or her own interest at heart. Jackson County needs a representative who will do just that -- represent his or her constituency!

-- Len and Deb Krajewski

UTJ MK admits to hitting his children

JPost.com Staff, THE JERUSALEM POST

Oct. 25, 2006

United Torah Judaism MK Shmuel Halpert said Wednesday during a committee session for children's rights said that it was okay for a parent to hit their child.

Halpert, a father of six children, explained that "hitting a child as part of his education is for his own good." Halpert went on to admit that when it was needed he hit his own children.

His comments sparked the anger of Labor MK Shelly Yacimovich, who was also participating in the meeting.

"You are complaining that hitting children is not allowed, here in the committee for children's rights?" she asked Halpert.

"Believe me," said Halpert, that when children were hit the education was much better. It is, by the way, better for the child."

Yacimovich responded to his remarks by saying, "hitting children is immoral, unhealthy, and completely invalid. I hereby object to what you have said in this specific context."

Halpert backed his comments with an example from the Torah. "King Solomon, the wisest of all people, said 'one who spares the rod hates his son.'

"No one can deny this. Even if we wanted to say we are the wisest people on earth, still, we are not wisest than King Solomon," said Halpert.

"Are you saying that you hit your child?" asked Yacimovich.

"When the need arose," responded the United Torah Judaism MK.

This article can also be read at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1159193519858&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

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Staffer guilty of crime stays on

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

By **Susan J. Demas**

sdemas@citpat.com -- 768-4927

A staff member for congressional candidate Tim Walberg awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to domestic violence last month.

Daniel A. Coons, 30, of Eaton Rapids, volunteer coordinator for Walberg, R-Tipton, remains on Walberg's staff, one of four paid full-timers.

Coons was initially charged with third-degree child abuse, a misdemeanor, on allegations he struck his 9-year-old male foster child in the face on Aug. 27. Coons pleaded guilty Sept. 18 to domestic violence, a lesser misdemeanor punishable by up to 93 days in jail or a \$500 fine.

He is to be sentenced Nov. 13 in Eaton County District Court. The judge could decide then to grant Coons special status, where the crime could be removed from his record if he completes up to two years probation.

Walberg, a pastor and retired fundraiser with the Moody Bible Institute, is running for the 7th District U.S. House seat against Sharon Renier, D-Munith. The 55-year-old father of three has made family values the cornerstone of his campaign.

Coons and his wife's two foster children have been removed from their home. The Michigan Foster Care Review Board ruled the children should be returned to the couple, said Mike Kutas, an Eaton County court administrator. A recommendation is pending from Michigan Children's Institute, a division of the Department of Human Services, Kutas said.

A family court judge dismissed an Aug. 31 motion to return the children, court records show. The case goes to trial Nov. 21.

"The state's Foster Care Review Board investigated this matter and recommends that this family be reunited. I support that decision," Walberg said Tuesday in a written statement, his only comment on the matter.

In the meantime, Coons remains on Walberg's staff, Campaign Manager Joe Wicks said Tuesday. He earned \$8,112 through Sept. 30, campaign finance records show. His wife, Sarah Coons, 27, was paid \$3,043 in salary and reimbursements.

Wicks and Walberg both declined to comment on the domestic violence or child-abuse charges, or when they learned of the incidents or Coons' plea.

According to a police report, Coons told Eaton Rapids Police he "tackled" his foster son on the night of Aug. 27, striking him once. In doing so, Coons' watch band broke. Coons also said he had "pushed (the boy's) head into the floor in his attempts to control him," the report stated.

Tracy Freeman, Eaton County court-appointed special advocate, inspected the child's injuries that night. The boy had a bruise and the beginning of a black eye on the left side of his face, finger marks on the right side and bruising and abrasions on his chin and trouble opening his jaw, Freeman wrote in her police statement.

Coons also said "a wooden spoon had been used to paddle (the boy)," prior to Aug. 27. He said foster-care workers told him to stop, a police report states.

Sarah Coons said the boy started the fight by refusing to stay in his room, police reports show. She alleged the boy jumped on her back and her husband "took (him) to the ground."

Coons' attorney, David A. Kallman of Lansing, said police and court reports give an "incomplete" and "inaccurate" account of what happened.

"(Daniel Coons) was defending his wife against a child who was out of control," Kallman said. "There was an incident -- he slapped him -- but (Coons) never would have done that if he wasn't defending his wife."

The night of the incident, Daniel Coons called a DHS caseworker, who arranged for the children to be placed in another foster home, according to a police report.

On Aug. 28, the boy was brought by the new family to Pennock Hospital in Hastings. An emergency-room nurse called police.

The Coonses were accompanied in their police interview by attorney La Rae G. Munk of Midland, Sarah Coons' mother, who has done work for Walberg's campaign.

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Published October 25, 2006

No more homeless in Michigan?

State launches drive to find shelter for all

By Tom Lambert
Lansing State Journal

It has been six years since Bill Sorrell has been able to sleep in the comfort of his own bed.

The 46-year-old Lansing man is like an estimated 50,700 others in the state: He has no place of his own to call home.

Sorrell says spending time in prison for dealing drugs, bouncing around between friends' and family members' homes and living in a homeless shelter have caused him to feel "like something less than a man."

"I forget how it feels to wake up, make breakfast in your own house and be lazy for the day," said Sorrell, who has three children and 10 grandchildren. "People take that for granted, but they shouldn't."

Now the state wants to try to prevent future predicaments like Sorrell's. On Tuesday, state officials announced a campaign to end homelessness within the next 10 years.

About 600 people attended the conference at the Lansing Center, with another day of speakers and workshops lined up for today.

Philip Mangano, the executive director of the United States Interagency Council, told the crowd Tuesday that Michigan is the first state to have a plan to end homelessness in every county.

"Nobody plans on being homeless," said Mangano, who was appointed by President Bush to lead the council in March 2002. "They are there because of bad personal decisions ... and bad public policy decisions."



(Photo by ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal)
Without a home: Volunteers of America client and volunteer Bill Sorrell is outside of the Lansing shelter on Tuesday. Sorrell, a father of three and grandfather of 10, is living at the VOA. He has been homeless for six years.

On the Web

- For more information on homeless in Michigan, go to mihomeless.org.

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The Michigan State Housing Development Authority has approved \$10.5 million in new funding for homeless youth housing and homeless families with children.

The funding will be used to house homeless people and also help them with problems they have, including substance abuse and mental illness.

The money is in addition to \$4 million for the second round of the Domestic Violence and Chronic Homeless initiatives granted in 2005, state officials said.

Michael DeVos, the Housing Development Authority's executive director, said the challenge is daunting, but it is possible to end homelessness in Michigan.

"Together we can build a caring community that simply no longer accepts homelessness, in any of its many forms, anywhere in the state of Michigan," he said.

Sorrell said while the state's goal is admirable, he is cautious about if it could be accomplished.

"I've seen people who are homeless for 20 years," he said.

"People have to want to help themselves, they have to take care of business. They can't be lazy."

Sorrell helps out at the Volunteers of America's Larch Street shelter; he said he's trying to get his life on track by finding a job and a place to live.

"With Thanksgiving and Christmas coming up, I would love to have a place for my children and grandchildren to come to - that would be the best feeling in the world," he said.

"I am working on it."

Contact Tom Lambert at 377-1063 or tlambert@lsj.com.

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Don't add to health care gap

Voting to end state affirmative action programs would hurt health care for minorities and increase costs for all

BY RICHARD LICHTENSTEIN

October 25, 2006

Michigan, like the rest of America, is plagued by intolerable health inequalities between whites and minority populations. Extensive research has documented that minorities have generally worse health, higher death rates and higher infant mortality rates, and are less likely to have access to care or to receive appropriate and effective care when they experience serious illness. And when one part of our population has poor access to health care, it tends to increase the cost of health care for all residents. High costs in turn may reduce the availability of important services, even for affluent patients. These problems are likely to get worse if Proposal 06-2 passes and affirmative action programs are eliminated.

Existing health inequalities are related in part to differences in social circumstances between whites and minorities, including income, education, nutrition, environmental quality and housing. Minorities also face inequalities when they enter the health care system. A recent report by the Institute of Medicine revealed that white patients are more likely to receive higher quality and more effective care than black or Latino patients -- even when the diagnosis, insurance coverage and social class of the patients are the same. Minorities also are less likely to receive basic, preventive health care services and more likely to live in communities where there are fewer health care providers.

One remedy for these problems is to increase the number of minority health care professionals. Minority patients tend to fare better when seeing a doctor whose race or ethnicity is the same as theirs, due primarily to more culturally sensitive interactions. Furthermore, doctors from minority groups tend to enhance access to the health care system for minority patients. African-American and Hispanic doctors are more likely than their white counterparts to enter primary care specialties, locate their practices in physician-scarce communities, and care for larger numbers of minority patients, especially those on Medicaid or the uninsured.

History has shown that the only effective way to increase the number of minority doctors and other health professionals is by pursuing race-conscious, affirmative action policies for admission to medical schools and programs such as nursing, dentistry, public health and pharmacy. Ensuring diverse student bodies in these programs also allows us to make certain that all health care professionals are trained in an environment that is sensitive to the specific needs of minority patients.

If Proposal 2 passes, the three public medical schools in Michigan, and most of the state's other health-profession training programs, can expect to see a steep decline in enrollment of minority students. Currently, many more qualified students apply to medical school each year than can be admitted, with the number of white students far surpassing the number of minority students. From all the qualified candidates, medical school admissions committees try to create balanced classes that will include the range of students needed to serve society's needs in the future.

Among the many characteristics they try to balance are race and ethnicity. If such committees could no longer use race or ethnicity in their admissions decisions, based on probability alone the number of minority students would fall. Proposal 06-2 would also outlaw other means medical schools use to attract more minority students, such as outreach, academic preparation and mentoring programs aimed specifically at talented minority students.

Before 1960, fewer than 4% of U.S. doctors were minorities. Starting in the 1970s, and continuing for more than three decades, Congress and American medical schools established affirmative action policies to increase minority student enrollment. As a result, minority students now comprise 12% of all medical students.

The only significant declines in minority admissions to medical schools since 1990 occurred after the passage of two anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives in California and Washington. These two initiatives, both of which outlawed affirmative action in public universities, dramatically decreased the numbers of minority medical students. Modeled after California's Proposition 209, Proposal 06-2 would have the same effect on Michigan's health professions schools.

The facts are clear. All of us should be deeply concerned about the potential for Proposal 2 to harm the quality of health care for Michigan citizens.

RICHARD LICHTENSTEIN is an associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. The views expressed in this

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061025/OPINION02/610250326/1070/OPINION&...> 10/25/2006



Richard Lichtenstein

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
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October 25, 2006

Funding cut threatens AIDS shelter

Detroit facility that provides housing, resources, education to men may shut after federal money disappears.

Amy Lee / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- A shelter for penniless men living with AIDS is in danger of shutting its doors after getting notice its funding is being eliminated.

The Off The Streets East Jefferson program houses eight homeless men with AIDS and provides resources and education to 35 infected men each year. It is one of two shelters in Detroit that houses homeless men with AIDS.

Off The Streets East Jefferson is working to find new funding sources and simultaneously preparing to close after getting notice its federal funding was cut, said Jim Lewis, vice president of adult programming for Matrix Human Services, which runs the Off The Streets program.

"We haven't gotten good answers from anybody about how this came about," Lewis said. "We've got eight men here and (the) majority have substance and mental health issues they're medically fragile, and will be homeless as a direct result of these cuts."

Detroit's Department of Health and Wellness Promotions has funneled \$125,000 annually to Off The Streets for four years, Lewis said. The money comes from the federal Housing Opportunities For Persons With AIDS program.

Shelter leaders were informed of the cut by an Oct. 3 letter from Jewell Martin, director of HIV/AIDS programs for Detroit's Department of Health and Wellness Promotions. In the letter, Martin stated the program has undergone "major cuts in funding" during the past two years, and stated the office's primary mission is to secure permanent housing.

"We are compelled to enact changes that will allow us to meet this primary goal," Martin wrote. Funding to Off The Streets East Jefferson will cease Nov. 30, according to Martin's letter.

The prospect worries Patrick Lewis, no relation to Jim Lewis, who lived at Off The Streets for about 13 months beginning in 2004 to beat a crack addiction. The former Marine was diagnosed with HIV in 1986, and needed a place to live in Detroit after completing an intensive four-month in-house substance abuse treatment program.

"It was a safe haven when I was trying to deal with the addiction problem, and it gave me an opportunity to rebuild my life," said Lewis, 45, who has a paid position as a residential aide at Off The Streets and lives in a Detroit apartment. "If it wasn't for Off The Streets I probably wouldn't be where I'm at now. And there are others who could be success stories, too. That's why we need that funding."

You can reach Amy Lee at (313) 222-2548 or alee@detnews.com.

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Michigan Report

October 24, 2006

P.S.C. URGES ‘BE WINTER-WISE’, PROVIDES GRANTS

The Public Service Commission launched its annual Be Winter-Wise campaign as it released \$45 million in grants assist low-income residents with their heating bills this winter.

The annual campaign helps to provide residents with tips on saving energy, ranging from reducing thermostat settings to adding insulation.

“While natural gas bills this heating season are expected to be about \$20 less per month than last winter, it is still wise to make energy efficient improvements now before the cold temperatures take hold,” said PSC Chair Peter Lark.

The commission also approved ([case No. U-13129](#)) the fall round of grants from the Low-Income and Energy Efficiency Fund, which provide assistance to low-income residents unable to keep up with their heat bills but who do not qualify for state financial assistance. A later round of grants will provide for energy efficiency programs.

The bulk of the grant funds went to the Department of Human Services, with \$28 million for the State Emergency Relief and Energy Direct program, which prevents shut-off, and \$3 million for the Arrearage Payment program.

Among other grants:

- The Heat And Warmth Fund and the Salvation Army: \$4.8 million each.
- Michigan Community Action Agency Alliance: \$2.3 million.
- Newaygo County: \$1 million for residents of a 10-county area.
- Downriver Community Conference: \$500,000 for Monroe and southern Wayne County areas.
- Lighthouse Emergency Services: \$250,000 for the City of Pontiac and Oakland County areas.
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Detroit: \$200,000 for low-income direct energy assistance.
- Capital Area Community Services: \$100,000.
- City of Livonia Housing Commission: \$18,000.

MPSC Awards Energy Assistance Grants

MIRS, Tuesday, October 24, 2006

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) today issued another round of low-income energy assistance grants to nine organizations for a total of \$45 million.

The organizations receiving the grants include:

- Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) \$31 million. Twenty-eight million dollars is for the State Emergency Relief and Energy Direct program to prevent threatened shutoff of energy services. The remaining \$3 million is for the Arrearage Payment program.
- The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) — \$4.8 million. The money is to be used for the low-income energy efficiency (LI/EE) program.
- Salvation Army — \$4.8 million. The grant is to serve households statewide ineligible for assistance from the DHS or for whom such assistance is insufficient or not available.
- Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) — \$2.3 million. The grant is for low-income direct energy assistance.
- Newaygo County — \$1 million. The money is to be used to assist clients in a 10-county area ineligible for the State Emergency Relief Program or for whom such assistance is insufficient or would not be available to avert an emergency.
- Downriver Community Conference — \$500,000. The money is to be used for energy assistance to low-income households in Monroe and southern Wayne County areas.
- Lighthouse Emergency Services — \$250,000. The grant is to assist clients in the City of Pontiac and Oakland County areas who are ineligible for assistance from the DHS or for whom such assistance is insufficient or would not be provided in time to avert an emergency.
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Detroit — \$200,000. The grant is for low-income direct energy assistance.
- Capital Area Community Services — \$100,000. This money is also for low-income direct energy assistance.
- City of Livonia Housing Commission — \$18,000. The grant is for low-income direct energy assistance.

The Commission today also reminded energy customers that now is the time to “Be Winter Wise” and increase the energy efficiency of their homes. An updated Web site at: www.michigan.gov/bewinterwise contains conservation tips as well as information on financial assistance programs available for low-income customers.

State Earns Fraud Detection Award

MIRS, Tuesday, October 24, 2006

The state's Department of Human Services (DHS) received an award from the National Association of State Chief Information Officers for using technology to detect fraud.

The DHS worked with the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to link provider and recipient data with wage and national food assistance data. In Fiscal Year 2005, the efforts identified more than \$9.2 million in fraudulent documented day care dollars that needed to be recovered.