

Beat: News

Former Federal Employee Sentenced to Eight Years in Prison

For Receipt of Child Pornography

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USPA NEWS - Defendant Downloaded and Viewed Images at Home and at Library of Congress. Gary Lee Peksa, a former federal employee, was sentenced today to eight years in prison for repeatedly connecting his cellphone to a wireless network at the Library of Congress and searching for, downloading, and viewing images and videos depicting the sexual abuse of young children.

The announcement was made by U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves, Wayne A. Jacobs, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Washington Field Office's Criminal Division, and J. Thomas. Manger, Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police.

Peksa, 56, of Mechanicsville, Maryland, pleaded guilty in December 2021, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, to one count of receipt of child pornography. He was sentenced by the Honorable Richard J. Leon. Following his prison term, Peksa will be placed on 20 years of supervised release. He also will be required to pay \$47,000 in restitution to victims depicted in the child pornography he received and possessed. He also must register as a sex offender for at least 15 years.

According to court documents, Peksa was a sheet metal mechanic who worked for the Architect of the Capitol at the Library of Congress. On various dates, between Oct. 11, 2018 and July 29, 2019, he used his cellphone and the public wireless network at the Library of Congress to access websites that contained images and videos of child pornography. He did so in areas including a bathroom, his office, and a breakroom. Additionally, Peksa used his personal laptop, cellphone, and WiFi service to access similar materials at home.

Peksa's conduct came to light after the Library of Congress network security operations center notified investigators of web traffic on the Library of Congress public wireless network of browsing associated with child pornography and the sexual exploitation of children. In July 2019, Capitol Police seized Peksa's cellphone and laptop. The cellphone had 199 images that showed minor boys and girls exposing their genitals and/or engaging in sexual activity. The laptop had 215 files that depicted young girls being sexually abused and assaulted.

Peksa was arrested on Oct. 21, 2019.

This case was investigated by the FBI Washington Field Office's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force and the U.S. Capitol Police. The task force is composed of FBI agents, along with other federal agents and detectives from northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. The task force is charged with investigating and bringing federal charges against individuals engaged in the exploitation of children and those engaged in human trafficking.

This case was brought as part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood initiative. In February 2006, the Attorney General created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Graves, Special Agent in Charge Jacobs, and Chief Manger commended the work of those who investigated the case from the FBI's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force and the U.S. Capitol Police. They also acknowledged the assistance provided by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. They expressed appreciation for the work of those who handled the case at the U.S. Attorney's Office, including former Paralegal Specialist Kenny Nguyen, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Amy E. Larson, who prosecuted the case.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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