

MARION COUNTY CONVICTS FATHER FOR ABUSE OF INFANT CHILDREN

News Release from **Marion Co. Dist. Attorney's Office**

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State of Oregon v. Reece A. Sorenson

Marion County Circuit Court Case 25CR45343

Salem, OR – September 25, 2026 – Today, Marion County Circuit Court Judge Courtland Geyer sentenced Reece A. Sorenson (age 29) to 66 months in the Oregon Department of Corrections with 36 months post-prison supervision. Sorenson pled guilty to five counts of Criminal Mistreatment in the First Degree from multiple events leading up to August 10, 2025.

At that time, Salem police detectives were called to Salem Hospital where Sorenson and his wife had brought their six-week-old twin children to the emergency room because one of the infants was unable to suckle properly.

While at the hospital, medical staff observed several concerning factors on both children. Medical staff at Salem Hospital and OHSU ultimately diagnosed, in addition to the mouth injury, that the first infant had four broken ribs. The second infant had bruising around the eyes (highly concerning for child physical abuse, especially in non-mobile children), twelve broken ribs, and broken collarbones. While it was unclear how many times each child had been injured, differences in healing made it clear that the abuse occurred over more than one incident.

Sorenson later admitted to using aggressive force on multiple separate occasions on both babies, causing the infants' significant injuries. Additionally, the investigation showed that he forcefully inserted a burp rag into one of the infant's mouths to stifle cries, which caused the initial infant's injury preventing the child from sucking properly.

"There are two concerning public safety factors in this case: obviously, the primary concern is the pain and injury Sorenson inflicted on his infant children," said District Attorney-elect Brendan Murphy. "I am glad that Marion County's child abuse response team and our office was able to hold Sorenson accountable for this horrendous behavior."

"The second factor is a gap in Oregon law that restricts our ability to hold offenders appropriately accountable in cases like this. Oregon criminal law simply isn't sufficient to adequately protect significantly abused non-verbal children."

Specifically, when nonverbal infants are grievously harmed, they are unable to communicate their level of injury. Description of pain is often evidence that prosecutors use to increase the seriousness of physical assault charges to appropriately hold offenders accountable. Those descriptions also help medical professionals assess risk of injury or death. Therefore, when non-verbal victims can't describe their level of pain prosecutors often cannot prove more serious theories of physical assault. Thus, Oregon criminal law has a gap, leaving some of our most vulnerable victims unable to receive appropriate justice.

Here, Sorenson was charged with multiple counts of Criminal Mistreatment in the First Degree for "causing physical injury." Criminal Mistreatment is a level C felony, Oregon's lowest level felony category. In contrast, had prosecutors been able to prove "serious physical injury" (often done so using a victim's description of pain) they could have possibly charged Assault in the First Degree (ORS 163.185). That crime is an A felony and carries a significantly more serious sentence under the law.

"We have tried to change this law for years," Murphy said. "Prosecutors are simply unable to get it over the legislative finish line. Despite numerous examples around the state that some of our most vulnerable populations need more protection, the proposal has consistently failed. Oregon should do better to protect victims who cannot describe their pain."

The minimum sentence that Sorenson faced was probation. The maximum sentence was approximately 148 months in prison. In this case, the state requested that the court impose 125 months Department of Corrections. Judge Geyer sentenced Sorenson to 66 months, approximately 33 months for each child. Sorenson is eligible for good time (approximately 6 months).

This case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Katharine Semple. The Marion County DA's Office wishes to acknowledge the medical team at the Salem Hospital, the critical and delicate work provided by Liberty House, and the thorough investigation by the Salem Police Department. Specifically, the detectives of Salem's Special Victims Unit were instrumental in resolving this case.

Oregon's children deserve to be safe in their own homes. If you or someone you know is unable to cope with the demands of parenting, please call the Oregon Family Support Network (reachoutoregon.org or 833-732-467), or call 211 or text "children" to 898211 to be connected with parenting support, early childhood and family services. Additionally, Family

Building Blocks and Liberty House are only two of several local nonprofits that provide parents with resources to help keep children safe.

Due to the involvement of child victims and the nature of criminal behavior, no additional details will be released.

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