



For Immediate Release  
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### **DELAWARE MAN TO SERVE LIFE IN PRISON FOR RAPE**



**John Joel Schaefer**

May 18, 2026 – Following a four day trial, a Delaware County jury found John “Joel” Schaefer, a 76-year-old Delaware man, guilty of 1 count of Rape (a felony of the first degree), 2 counts of Gross Sexual Imposition (a felony of the fourth degree and a felony of the third degree), 1 count of Tampering with Evidence (a felony of the third degree), and 1 count of Making or Causing a False Report of Child Abuse or Child Neglect (a misdemeanor of the first degree).

Charges in this case stemmed from multiple disclosures of sexual abuse that occurred in 2022, 2015, and 2013. While under investigation, Schaefer submitted false allegations of child abuse and neglect and false allegations against a mandated reporter to the Delaware County Department of Job and Family Services.

Schaefer was sentenced today to life in prison without the possibility of parole by visiting Judge Richard Frye for the Rape charge. Judge Frye also sentenced Schaefer to 5 years in prison and 18 months in prison for the Gross Sexual Imposition charges, 24 months for Tampering with Evidence, and 180 days in jail for Making or Causing a False Report. All other sentences except for the misdemeanor charge were ordered to be served consecutively. Schaefer must also register as a Tier III sex offender.



“Last week and today, brave victims, walked into the courtroom and confronted the man who committed unspeakable crimes against them. Because of their bravery, a sexual predator was taken off the streets of our community.” Prosecutor Melissa Schiffel said.

This case was investigated by Delaware City Police Department and prosecuted by Prosecutor Melissa Schiffel, Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mark Sleeper, and Assistant Prosecutor Ashlee Beougher.

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