



## News Release

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### **Former Finger Lakes DDSO Employee Designated as Level 3 Sex Offender**

*Case Prosecuted by the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs*

Rochester, NY-- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced today that Eric Ferguson (DOB: 9/02/67), who was convicted of a felony sex offense for abusing a woman in his care while employed at Finger Lakes DDSO will be placed on New York State's Sex Offender Registry.

At a hearing conducted in Monroe County Court, the Honorable Victoria A. Argento determined Ferguson posed a high risk of repeat offense and threat to public safety because the defendant exploited his professional relationship as a caregiver to victimize a vulnerable person. Ferguson was designated as a Level 3 sex offender, which is the highest risk level and requires the offender to register for life.

"Offenders who consciously choose people who cannot protect themselves or effectively report their abuse pose a greater risk to public safety as their crimes are more difficult to detect and prosecute," said Gunning. "The Justice Center is committed to investigating these difficult cases, holding offenders responsible and seeking justice for the vulnerable victims."

The defendant admitted he subjected the victim to sexual contact on multiple occasions, which included touching her breasts and grabbing her groin area. He also had the victim touch his penis. As a condition of a plea agreement reached in September 2014, Ferguson was also permanently barred from working with individuals with special needs in New York State. He was sentenced to 45 days in jail to be followed by 5-years probation. He has been terminated from his position.

Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutors Andrew Botts and Rachel Dunn prosecuted the case.

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