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NEWS RELEASE

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Bus Driver Sentenced to Prison for Student's Death in Whittier

A 37-year-old man was sentenced today to two years in state prison for leaving a special needs student in a parked bus for hours, which led to the student's death, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

On Jan. 6, Armando Abel Ramirez of Rialto pleaded guilty to one felony count of dependent adult abuse resulting in death in case VA141515.

Deputy District Attorney Michael DeRose of the Victim Impact Program, who prosecuted the case, said in the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2015, police were dispatched to a bus yard in Whittier where they found special needs student Hun Jun "Paul" Lee laying on the floor of a parked bus.

All of the windows in the bus were closed and the temperature that day was near 96 degrees Fahrenheit. Paramedics were called, but Lee, 19, was pronounced dead at the scene, the prosecutor said.

Law enforcement immediately began an investigation into Lee's death and learned the Sierra Adult School student could not verbally communicate and needed special care.

Additionally, police discovered on the day of the incident, Ramirez was a substitute driver for Lee's bus. Ramirez also was working a split shift, according to the prosecutor.

Ramirez believed Lee had gotten off the bus to go to school in the morning, the prosecutor said, yet he did not walk to the rear of the bus and did not look over his shoulder to check that any one was left in the vehicle at the end of his morning shift.

According to the prosecutor, after Ramirez's morning shift, he returned the bus to the bus yard and left.

When the defendant returned to work later in the day for the second part of his shift, he was notified by a dispatcher that Lee was missing, the prosecutor said.

At that point, Ramirez went to his bus, found Lee unresponsive and called for help, the prosecutor added.

The case was investigated by the Whittier Police Department.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.