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NEWS RELEASE

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**Bus Driver Charged in Connection with
Student's Death in Whittier**

A 37-year-old man was charged today with leaving a special needs student in a parked bus for hours that led to the student's death, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Armando Abel Ramirez (dob 3/3/79) of Rialto has been charged with one felony count of dependent adult abuse resulting in death in case VA141515.

The defendant is scheduled to be arraigned on April 25 in Department 4 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Bellflower Branch.

Prosecutors said in the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2015, police were dispatched to a bus yard in Whittier where they found special needs student Hun Joon "Paul" Lee laying on a parked bus floor.

All of the windows in the bus were closed and the temperature that day was near 90 degrees Fahrenheit, prosecutors added.

Paramedics were called and they attempted to resuscitate Lee, 19, however he was pronounced dead, prosecutors said.

Law enforcement immediately began an investigation into Lee's death and learned he was a student at Sierra Adult School who 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, prosecutors said.

Ramirez reportedly believed Lee had gotten off the bus to go to school in the morning, according to prosecutors, yet he allegedly 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 prosecutors, after Ramirez's morning shift, he reportedly returned the bus to the bus yard, filled out paper work and left for home.

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, prosecutors said.

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

If convicted as charged, the defendant faces a maximum possible sentence of nine years in state prison.

The case is being investigated by the Whittier Police Department.

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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.