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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Rhode Island Man Sentenced to Jail for Traveling to California to Meet Palmdale Minor for Sex**

An 18-year-old Rhode Island man was sentenced today for flying to Southern California to have sex with a 12-year-old Palmdale girl, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Jon Hatami said Joel Rivera was sentenced to one year in county jail, five years of formal probation, one year of sex offender counseling and 30 days of community labor. The defendant must also register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Frank Tavelman also gave Rivera a 5 year and 8 month state-prison suspended sentence, which could be imposed if he violates probation.

Additionally, the defendant was ordered to stay away from the victim for 10 years and his cell phone and computer will be destroyed.

On March 23, Rivera pleaded no contest to one count each of meeting a minor for lewd purposes, distributing or showing pornography to a minor and contact with a minor for sexual purposes.

The defendant began contacting the Palmdale girl through an anonymous webcam chatting app in August 2015. Rivera exchanged sexually explicit images with the girl for nearly a month through various messaging apps, the prosecutor said.

The victim's mother, who was worried about the amount of time her daughter spent on her cell phone and computer, discovered the videos and messages after going through her child's electronics, Hatami said. Once she found out Rivera planned to fly in from Rhode Island to have sex with her daughter, the mother contacted the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the prosecutor added.

Rivera was arrested on Sept. 3, 2015, at Burbank Bob Hope Airport.

Case MA066878 was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

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### **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.