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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Man Sentenced for Fatally Stabbing Bus Passenger in East Los Angeles**

A 29-year-old Montebello man was sentenced today to 26 years to life in state prison for fatally stabbing a passenger on a bus in East Los Angeles last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

A jury convicted Manuel Ortiz Jr. on Sept. 9 of one count of first-degree murder and found true an allegation that he used a deadly and dangerous weapon, a knife.

Deputy District Attorneys Christina Lutz and Marlene Martinez prosecuted case BA467237.

On April 9, 2018, Ortiz boarded a bus at Montebello and Whittier boulevards.

After riding the bus for several blocks to Whittier Boulevard and Gerhart Avenue, the defendant stabbed 22-year-old Austin Zavala multiple times in the neck and head in an apparently random attack, according to court testimony.

Ortiz exited the bus and fled but was later arrested. The victim, a college student from Whittier, was taken to a local hospital and died on June 10, 2018.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's 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.