



OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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PRESS RELEASE

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A preliminary hearing scheduled today in a child molestation case was continued at the request of defense counsel, and the defendant was released from custody despite the strong objections of the district attorney's office.

Austin Curato is facing multiple counts of lewd and lascivious acts upon a child arising out the molestation of three children all under 10 years of age. After the defense request for continuance of the preliminary hearing was granted, the Honorable Anthony Anderson decided to release Curato on his own recognizance to a drug treatment program. This release was granted over the strenuous objections of the prosecutor related to public safety concerns. Curato had been in custody since March on \$160,000 bail.

If convicted of the charges he is facing, Mr. Curato faces a minimum of 15 years to life in state prison. Under the law, a judge is required to assume the charges are true in determining whether to set bail and in what amount.

For questions, contact District Attorney Jerry Benito at 245-6310.