



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 22, 2016
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Ulster County Man Charged with Abusing Person with Disabilities in His Care *Case investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center*

Saugerties, NY – NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced an employee of The Arc Ulster-Greene was arrested and arraigned in Town of Saugerties Justice Court on felony charges he abused a person with disabilities in his care.

John Walker (DOB: 10/06/1987) of Kingston was charged with:

- Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent Person in the First Degree, a class "E" felony;
- Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent Person in the Second Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- Assault in the Third Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- Menacing in the Third Degree, a class "B" misdemeanor; and
- Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

The charges stem from an incident in June 2016 in which Walker allegedly yelled at and struck the victim in the face while assisting the victim from the lavatory of a residential facility. The victim suffered bruises and a black eye.

“Direct care staff have difficult jobs that can be very frustrating,” said Special Prosecutor Gunning. “While most staff do laudable work and treat those in their care with respect, those, like this defendant, who act out their frustrations on vulnerable persons and choose to assault them, will be held accountable.”

The defendant was arraigned before the Honorable Daniel N. Lamb of Town of Saugerties Justice Court, and released on his own recognizance, to reappear in court at a later date. Walker, employed as a Residential Specialist, was suspended from his position. The case was investigated by the Saugerties Police Department, with assistance by the Justice Center, and is being prosecuted by Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Deandra Macomber.

About the Justice Center

The Justice Center began operations on June 30, 2013. It operates a toll-free hotline that receives reports of allegations of abuse, neglect and significant incidents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone who witnesses or suspects the abuse or neglect of a person with special needs can make a report. Mandated reporters who have reasonable cause to suspect that a reportable incident has occurred by staff must report it to the Justice Center immediately upon

discovery. The Justice Center is not a first responder so if a report involves an emergency situation, the caller is instructed to hang up and dial 9-1-1.

The Justice Center is authorized to investigate all reports of abuse and neglect, pursue administrative sanctions against staff found responsible for misconduct and its Special Prosecutor/Inspector General shares jurisdiction with local district attorneys to prosecute criminal offense allegations. The Justice Center notifies local district attorneys of all potential criminal cases.

Justice Center Individual and Family Support advocates provide guidance and information to victims, their families, personal representatives and guardians about the reporting and investigation process, offer support during criminal court proceedings and are available to accompany victims during interviews and court appearances.

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Editor's note: In compliance with Rule 3.6(b)(6) of the Rules of Professional Conduct, you are advised that a charge is an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.