

# Fall River man sentenced to 5-7 years in prison after statutory rape conviction

Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced today that a 26-year old Fall River man has been convicted in Superior Court of statutory rape of a child and will serve five to seven years in state prison along with three years of probation after his release.

Robert Heaberlin Jr. pled guilty to four counts of statutory rape of a child for his involvement in a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old female relative. Defense attorney Scott Bradley and Assistant District Attorney Shelby Smith submitted the agreed upon plea to Judge Raffi Yessayan, which was accepted.

On September 10, 2015, the victim's mother contacted the Fall River Police Department after witnessing her young daughter and the then 25 year old defendant engaging in inappropriate contact. Upon further questioning, the victim disclosed that she and the defendant had been involved in a year long sexual relationship. This relationship was further evidenced by text messages between the victim and defendant. In an effort to protect the victim's identity, this office will not disseminate any other facts about the case.

As part of the plea, the defendant must register as a sex offender. The victim and her mother were pleased with the sentence.

"This defendant took advantage of his familial relationship with the victim and the age difference between them," said District Attorney Quinn. "The prison sentence was appropriate, given the defendant's conduct."