

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor

Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter

UPDATE: April 30, 2025

11th District judges rule on two Trumbull County appeals

The Ohio 11th District Court of Appeals this week filed decisions in two Trumbull County cases.

First, the court dismissed the appeal of convicted murderer Zachary Gurd who was sentenced to life in prison for his part in a 2023 fatal house fire in Warren. The court had scheduled oral arguments in the case for 9:30 a.m. May 29.

According to court records, Gurd's attorney, Michael Partlow, had filed the motion to dismiss the appeal, after the State had filed its response to Gurd's initial appellate brief.

Gurd and two co-defendants were all given life sentences for their actions on the night of Jan. 19, 2023, including setting the fire that killed 16-year-old Chassidy Broadstone, who was sleeping in the upper floor of the home in the 400 block of Nevada Avenue NW in Warren.

In a second opinion rendered this week, the 11th District court reversed the decision of a Trumbull County court judge who granted defendant Cyler Jacob Reed early termination of community control or probation. The victim in the case had filed the appeal with the appellate court seeking a reversal of that decision.

On July 7, 2022, Reed, 25, of Hubbard, pleaded guilty to a felony trespassing into a habitation and misdemeanor criminal damaging and menacing charges. Reed was sentenced to five years' probation, a suspended jail sentence, ordered to write a letter of apology to the victim and pay \$3,700 in restitution to the victim.

The case involved a June 2021 incident where Reed kicked in the door to the victim's home and entered, searching through each room while carrying a taser. Reed told the victim he was there to arrest the victim's son on a warrant for failure to appear in Newton Falls court on a misdemeanor charge.

At a Sept. 5, 2024, hearing before Judge Ronald J. Rice, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Michael Burnett opposed early termination of probation because

Reed had only served two of his five years of community control. However, the judge ruled that Reed would be discharged from probation early.

The victim was denied the chance to address the court and after complaining to the court, a second hearing was scheduled for Sept. 25, 2024, with the victim being granted up to five minutes to speak. However, the victim did not appear for that Sept. 25 hearing, and the Court ruling stood.

The appellate court, led by Judges Robert J. Patton, Matt Lynch and Scott Lynch, ruled that under Marsy's Law, "a victim has standing to challenge a final order on sentencing through direct appeal."

The 11th District judges remanded Reed's case back to the Common Pleas court for a new hearing on the early termination of Reed's probation.

For more information, contact Guy M. Vogrin, investigator / public information officer for the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office, at 330-675-2485.