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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Re: Jury Trial Conviction: Child Sexual Abuse: Joel Santiz: BF182234A

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a conviction in a significant child molestation case today. On Thursday, November 18, 2021, a Kern County jury found defendant Joel Santiz guilty of five counts of child sexual molestation against three victims including sexual penetration with a child ten years old or younger, lewd and lascivious acts with a child under the age of fourteen, sexual penetration with a person under age fourteen, and continuous sexual abuse. DDA Kara Thompson presented the evidence at trial that resulted in the conviction.

Beginning in 2013, Santiz sexually molested the first girl, who was 9 years old at the time. With that victim, the defendant engaged in acts of touching and sexual penetration. Between 2019 and 2020 the defendant sexually molested two other victims.

The second girl was between 10 and 11 years old at the time and when Santiz engaged in acts of touching, sexual penetration, oral copulation, and masturbation with that victim. During that same timeframe, Santiz also sexually molested a third girl who was between the ages of ten to twelve. Santiz engaged in acts of touching, sexual penetration, oral copulation, and masturbation with her. The molestation was ultimately discovered in August of 2020, when one of the victims came forward to report the abuse. Santiz was 33 years old in 2013, and is now 41 years old.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the verdict, stating: "When sexual predators target and victimize children, public safety and every sense of justice demand severe penalties. This conviction is a reminder of how important it is that prosecutors amplify the voices of victims to bring justice for the case and protect the community by ensuring Santiz is never allowed to prey on children again."

The case was investigated by the Bakersfield Police Department and support for the victims was provided by the District Attorney's Office Bureau of Victim Services. Sentencing is set for December 20, 2021 before Superior Court Judge Judith Dulcich, where Santiz faces a sentence of up to 60 years to life and lifetime sex offender registration.