



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

Interstate 93 Protesters Admit Guilt

Prosecution request for jail time denied

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The remaining ten defendants charged in connection with blocking traffic – including ambulances transporting injured patients – on the Southeast Expressway January 15, 2015, pled guilty to the crime of Willful Obstruction of an Emergency Vehicle today (February 4, 2016), but escaped the jail time that prosecutors were seeking.

"We felt that incarceration was appropriate given the recklessness and potential for harm this created. I believe that 90 days in jail was an appropriate request," District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey said after the disagreed plea was finalized. Ninety days in the house of correction is the maximum penalty allowable for Willful Obstruction of an Emergency Vehicle.

"The damage they were doing was not abstract to these people," Morrissey said. "There was an ambulance visible to these people where they sat. They knew as they blocked the road that they were standing between someone who needed medical treatment and that treatment. They were being told by police, but they could see it with their own eyes. They just felt no compassion and no responsibility."

Judge Mark Coven sentenced each of the protesters to 6 months of unsupervised probation, during which time they need to complete 60 hours of community service at a non-profit organization approved by the Quincy District Court probation department.

Those admitting guilt today were: Mark Schwaller, 33, James Billman, 26, Noah McKenna, 29, Emily Osmum, 28, Nicole Sullivan, 26, Angela Davis, 44, Eli Cohen, 26, Brett West, 27, William Connolly, 27, and Joshua Nickel, 25, who also admitted sufficient facts to negligent operation of a motor vehicle for using his car as a shield to block the road while the barrels were unloaded – a charge continued without a finding by the court.

The daughter of a man whose ambulance was blocked from reaching Level 1 Trauma Center following a car crash, forcing him to be diverted to a less equipped hospital, delivered an impact statement to the court calling the event "a reckless attempt to draw attention to what I feel is a very important topic."

Note: Two other defendants, Nelli Routsalainen, 26, of Finland, formerly of Roxbury, and Jeremy Bingham, 24, of W. Virginia, formerly of Arlington, pled guilty on January 29, 2016 and were given the same 6 months probationary sentence with community service.