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Coeur d'Alene man gets 15 years in prison for sexual abuse of young girl

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A former high school teacher in Coeur d'Alene was sentenced Monday to 15 years in prison for molesting a 5-year-old relative.

Daniel Abram Taylor was sentenced by 1st District Judge Fred Gibler to five years plus up to 10 years more. He was handcuffed and taken into custody after the hearing.

Although convicted by a jury that heard his admission of the crime, Taylor maintained his innocence and suggested the girl was the victim of her mother's manipulation.

Taylor said he came close to killing himself after his first trial, which ended in a hung jury, but then began to pursue a new career in sustainable transportation.

"I have a lot to give," he told the judge. "I don't think taking me out of society is beneficial in the long run."

His lawyer, Rick Baughman, asked Gibler to place Taylor on probation. Taylor already has lost his job, career, house, self-respect and so much more, Baughman said.

"He lost his family," he said.

But Gibler said probation wouldn't work because Taylor continues to deny the crime and would not submit to rehabilitation, including sex offender treatment.

Art Verharen, the Kootenai County deputy prosecuting attorney, recommended a sentence of 25 years, 10 of it fixed. He read a letter from the victim in which she said she has experienced stress and nightmares from the abuse.

Baughman complained that the case was driven by bias, resentment and "character assassination" of Taylor, and that far worse cases of child sex abuse end in lighter sentences. He asked Gibler to delay the prison term while Taylor appeals his conviction, but the judge said no.

The girl's mother told police that in 2012 Taylor and her daughter were showering together when a rape allegedly took place. He was charged with three felonies, including rape, in December 2013.

According to court files, a police officer who interviewed Taylor about the allegations told him of the girl's account, and Taylor responded that "everything (she) has said is true."

Two of the charges were dropped and Taylor went to trial on one felony count of lewd conduct with a child. The judge declared a mistrial in February 2015, and Taylor was convicted at a second trial last December.

Taylor resigned from the Coeur d'Alene School District on March 25, 2014. He had been a teacher at Venture High School, an alternative school.

About a dozen members of Guardian of the Children, a biker organization dedicated to protecting victims of child abuse, attended Monday's sentencing.