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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS FOR TWO COUNTS OF
AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A DISABLED PERSON**

October 27, 2015

GALVESTON – Today, Jerry Lee Cozart, 48, was sentenced to 10 years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. On Friday, a jury found Cozart guilty and yesterday set punishment at 5 years for each count. Cozart was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Kacey Launius and Matthew Shawhan, with Judge Michelle Slaughter, in the 405th Judicial District Court, presiding. Jared Robinson and Jeth Jones represented Cozart.

Cozart was arrested and charged in 2014 for two counts of aggravated sexual assault; both offenses occurred in late 2012 against the same victim, a mentally disabled minor. The State provided testimony to the jury, explaining that the victim had the mental capacity of a 2nd to 3rd grader.

The defendant testified during punishment, blaming the jury, telling them they rushed to find him guilty. Cozart also attacked the State's witnesses, saying they each lied about him and his character; however, when questioned by the State as to which statements were lies, Cozart could not identify any specific statements.

During closing arguments, the State told the jury, "this defendant saw how vulnerable the victim was. He took the time to build the victim's trust and that of the family. And at his first opportunity, he took advantage of that trust. He took advantage of the victim's disability, and he preyed upon the victim."

Cozart faced a sentencing range of 5 years to 99 years or Life in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He will not be eligible for parole until at least half of his sentence is served. Upon the State's motion, the Judge ordered Cozart's two 5 years sentences to be stacked, meaning he could serve a maximum of 10 years. Once released from prison, Cozart will be required to register for life, every 90 days, as a sex offender.

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