

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, EIGHTH APPELLATE DISTRICT,
CUYAHOGA COUNTY

State v. Wright

2026-Ohio-1285 · No. No. 115514 · Decided April 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals affirmed Charles Wright’s convictions and aggregate prison sentence following his guilty plea to sexual battery and two counts of endangering children. The court rejected his ineffective-assistance claim, holding that counsel was not deficient for failing to request an explanation of the sexual-battery elements during the plea colloquy or for failing to move to withdraw the plea at sentencing. The court also concluded that Wright’s sentencing statements were attempts to minimize or mitigate his conduct rather than clear protestations of innocence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Deena R. Calabrese, J.; Mary J. Boyle, P.J.; Eileen A. Gallagher, J.
JURISDICTION	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County
DECIDED	April 9, 2026
DOCKET	No. 115514
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Charles Wright appealed his conviction and sentence following a negotiated guilty plea, asserting ineffective assistance of counsel.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Claims of ineffective assistance of counsel are reviewed de novo. Counsel's performance is evaluated under the deferential Strickland standard, with a strong presumption that counsel's conduct falls within the wide range of reasonable professional assistance.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio appellate opinion
PARTIES	Charles Wright v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- ineffective assistance
- plea bargaining
- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defense counsel rendered ineffective assistance by failing to request that the trial court state the elements of sexual battery during the guilty-plea colloquy.
2. Whether defense counsel rendered ineffective assistance by failing to move to withdraw Wright's guilty plea, or to pause sentencing to confer with him, after Wright made statements minimizing or denying the conduct underlying the plea.

HOLDINGS

1. Counsel was not ineffective because Wright failed to show that the omission rendered his plea unknowing or involuntary, deficient performance, or a reasonable probability of a different result.
2. Counsel was not ineffective for failing to move to withdraw the guilty plea because Wright's sentencing statements were attempts to mitigate or minimize his conduct rather than clear protestations of innocence, and he did not establish that a plea-withdrawal motion would have been granted.
3. Wright failed to establish ineffective assistance because he did not prove deficient performance or prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"We find that Wright has not shown that defense counsel's assistance was deficient or that Wright's defense was prejudiced. Therefore, we affirm Wright's conviction and sentence."

"We do not agree with Wright's contention that his statements during the sentencing hearing were protestations of innocence."

"For the reasons stated above, we find that Wright has not demonstrated that defense counsel's assistance was deficient or that Wright's defense was prejudiced."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The charges arose from alleged physical and sexual abuse of Wright's three children between September 15, 2022, and April 9, 2023. Hospital staff discovered that one child had a fractured arm and significant bruising, and the children reported additional abuse during forensic interviews. Wright pleaded guilty to amended sexual battery and two endangering-children counts, but at sentencing he minimized or denied the sexual conduct and described directing other children to rough up the child who suffered the broken arm.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Cuyahoga County grand jury indicted Wright on eleven counts, including rape, gross sexual imposition, endangering children, and domestic violence. Wright later pleaded guilty to amended sexual-battery and endangering-children charges under a negotiated plea agreement; the remaining counts and specifications were dismissed. The Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas imposed an aggregate indefinite prison term of

twelve to fifteen years. The court of appeals overruled Wright's ineffective-assistance assignment of error and affirmed the conviction and sentence.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case was remanded to the trial court for execution of the sentence. A special mandate was directed to issue, and bail pending appeal was terminated.

CASES CITED

- Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668 (1984)
- McMann v. Richardson, 397 U.S. 759, 771 n.14 (1970)
- In re S.A., 2019-Ohio-4782, ¶ 46 (8th Dist.)
- Michel v. Louisiana, 350 U.S. 91, 101 (1955)
- State v. Davenport, 2018-Ohio-2933, ¶ 25 (8th Dist.)
- State v. McCann, 2025-Ohio-966, ¶ 18 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Madrigal, 87 Ohio St. 3d 378, 389 (2000)
- State v. Hamblin, 37 Ohio St. 3d 153, 155-156 (1988)
- Vaughn v. Maxwell, 2 Ohio St. 2d 299, 301 (1965)
- State v. Munoz, 2023-Ohio-1895, ¶ 15 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Milczewski, 2012-Ohio-1743, ¶ 5 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Kelley, 57 Ohio St. 3d 127 (1991)
- United States v. Broce, 488 U.S. 563, 574 (1989)
- State v. Meadows, 2022-Ohio-4513, ¶ 18 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Engle, 74 Ohio St. 3d 525, 527 (1996)
- State v. Wangul, 2005-Ohio-1175, ¶ 10 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Kavlich, 2000 Ohio App. LEXIS 2648 (8th Dist. June 15, 2000)
- State v. Rainey, 3 Ohio App. 3d 441 (10th Dist. 1982)
- Ohio v. Marneros, 2021-Ohio-2844, ¶ 17 (8th Dist.)