

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, TWELFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT, BUTLER
COUNTY

State v. Hedrick

2026-Ohio-1903 · No. CA2025-11-128 · Decided May 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The Twelfth District Court of Appeals of Ohio affirmed Joseph Hedrick's sentences following guilty pleas to aggravated assault and assault. The court held that the 16-month felony sentence was not contrary to law and that the trial court did not abuse its discretion by imposing the maximum misdemeanor jail sentence without expressly finding that the offense was the worst form of the offense.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Twelfth Appellate District, Butler County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Melena S. Siebert; Matthew R. Byrne; Robert A. Hendrickson
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Twelfth Appellate District, Butler County
DECIDED	May 26, 2026
DOCKET	CA2025-11-128
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Hedrick appealed from the Butler County Court of Common Pleas' sentencing judgment following his guilty plea to aggravated assault and assault.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Felony sentences are reviewed under R.C. 2953.08(G)(2), and may be modified or vacated only upon a clear and convincing finding that the record does not support applicable statutory findings or that the sentence is otherwise contrary to law. Misdemeanor sentences are reviewed for abuse of discretion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	Joseph Hedrick v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- sentencing
- criminal procedure
- standard of review
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

sentencing

appellate practice

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court's 16-month sentence for fourth-degree-felony aggravated assault was clearly and convincingly contrary to law and whether community control was required.
2. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by imposing the maximum sentence for first-degree-misdemeanor assault without expressly finding that Hedrick committed the worst form of the offense.

HOLDINGS

1. The 16-month prison sentence for aggravated assault was not clearly and convincingly contrary to law because it was within the permissible statutory range, the trial court properly imposed postrelease control, and the court stated that it considered the purposes and principles of felony sentencing and the seriousness and recidivism factors.
2. A trial court is not required to expressly find on the record that a defendant committed the worst form of a misdemeanor offense before imposing the maximum misdemeanor jail sentence, and the trial court did not abuse its discretion in imposing the 180-day sentence for assault.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Nothing in the statute authorizes an appellate court to \"independently weigh the evidence in the record and substitute its judgment for that of the trial court concerning the sentence that best reflects compliance with R.C. 2929.11 and 2929.12.\"" (¶ 8)

"A trial court, however, is not required to make specific findings on the record before imposing a maximum misdemeanor sentence." (¶ 14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Hedrick pleaded guilty to amended charges arising from two incidents involving minors. In one incident, he struck a 16-year-old victim on the buttocks with a paddle while her hands and feet were strapped down, causing serious physical harm, and told her, "I could have raped you." In the second incident, he fondled the breasts of a 13-year-old victim and caused her physical injury. The trial court imposed a 16-month prison term for aggravated assault and a concurrent 180-day jail term for assault.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hedrick was originally indicted on two counts of gross sexual imposition and two counts of sexual imposition. Under a plea agreement, he pleaded guilty to amended charges of fourth-degree-felony aggravated assault and first-degree-misdemeanor assault. The trial court imposed a 16-month prison term for aggravated assault and a concurrent 180-day jail term for assault. The Ohio Twelfth District Court of Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Marcum, 2016-Ohio-1002
- State v. Venters, 2025-Ohio-3111, ¶ 53 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Bryant, 2022-Ohio-1878, ¶ 21
- State v. Jones, State v. Jones, 2020-Ohio-6729, ¶¶ 41-42
- State v. Jezioro, 2017-Ohio-2587, ¶ 6 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Hancock, 2006-Ohio-160, ¶ 130
- State v. Kinsworthy, 2014-Ohio-2238, ¶ 30 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Elzey, 2025-Ohio-5322, ¶ 50 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Yeban, 2024-Ohio-2545, ¶¶ 69-70 (1st Dist.)

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