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IMPD Officer charged with Battery and accused of false reporting in altercation with 17-year-old
Incident captured on video in front of Shortridge High School

(Indianapolis, Ind.) — Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced today that an IMPD Officer has been charged in connection with a physical altercation that occurred between the officer and a 17-year-old student outside Shortridge High School on August 29. Officer Robert Lawson has been charged with Battery (Class A Misdemeanor) for allegedly striking the student without a legitimate concern for self-defense. Prosecutor Curry said additional charges of Obstruction of Justice (Level 6 Felony), Perjury (Level 6 Felony), False Informing (Class B Misdemeanor), and Official Misconduct (Level 6 Felony), arose from Officer Lawson's alleged false statements made while reporting the incident in official documentation.

Prosecutor Curry said Officer Lawson is accused of making false statements under oath or affirmation in a probable cause affidavit submitted in support of arrest of the 17-year-old. The juvenile was not taken into custody, and no delinquency action has been filed against him in this matter.

In the official documents allegedly prepared and signed by Officer Lawson on August 29, it states that he threw an open hand palm strike in fear that the 17-year-old was about to strike the him. Officer Lawson allegedly reports that the palm strike was successful, and officers were able to cuff the 17-year-old without any further force. These statements are believed to be false and contrary to video evidence which appears to show Officer Lawson striking the juvenile with a closed fist and continuing to use force including a knee strike to the juvenile's abdomen or chest area.

Further, according to the charging documents filed today, Officer Lawson reported that another officer present for the incident stated she observed the 17-year-old swing his fist at Officer Lawson a split second before Officer Lawson threw the palm strike. In an interview with investigators, that officer denied making the statement that she observed the 17-year-old swing his fist.

IMPD Officers were called to the school by the Indianapolis Public Schools Police Department to assist in dispersing a large disturbance and hallway fight between juvenile males. The 17-year-old had been involved in that fight and was being escorted off the school's property into the custody of his aunt when the confrontation between the aunt, juvenile, and IMPD Officer Lawson occurred. The confrontation and physical altercation was captured on video by a third party at the scene and has been made public by non-official sources.

Officer Lawson is expected to turn himself in under arrangements made between his attorney and the Court.

A charge of a crime is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.