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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**RE: COMMONWEALTH V. ZAKARY WALLS**

State Prison Ordered for Drug Dealer who Assaulted Undercover Cop

Saying she wanted to send a message to drug dealers that they can't bring violence to this community, a County Court Judge on Thursday sentenced a city man to up to a decade in state prison.

In February, Zakary J. Walls, 21, of 1264 W. Third St., plead guilty to numerous drug offenses for selling marijuana to an undercover County Detective working with the Narcotics Enforcement Unit. Walls elected to go to trial, however, on various assault charges for attacking the undercover officer as the officer tried to leave Walls' residence on April 3, 2014.

Walls grabbed the officer from behind and tried to force him to remain in the residence by taking a swing at the officer and putting him in a chokehold. Despite other officers rushing into the residence, Walls continued to fight with the officer.

At trial, Walls was found guilty of aggravated and simple assault as well as resisting arrest and unlawful restraint. Walls had testified that he only wanted to talk to the man and was putting his arm around him.

Saying she understands how police officers put their lives on the line, President Judge Nancy L. Butts went above the sentencing guidelines and sentenced Walls to 2 ½ to 10 years in prison. She added five years of probation once he is released from prison.

"We applaud Judge Butt's appropriately tough sentence in this case," said Lycoming County District Attorney Eric R. Linhardt. "We all recognize that what we ask our narcotic officers to do is difficult and dangerous, but an assault on our police officers can never be tolerated."