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HERNANDEZ MARTINEZ SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS FOR KILLING TWO IN DUI CRASH

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces the Honorable Jonathan Sacks sentenced Diego Hernandez Martinez to 25 years in Florida State Prison for two counts of DUI Manslaughter followed by two and a half years of probation and a permanent driver's license suspension. Hernandez Martinez previously pleaded guilty on July 9, 2025, for driving under the influence and causing the crash that killed 25-year-olds Gabe DiSpirito and Joe Royce.

On Oct. 3, 2024, officers responded to a fatal crash on Beach Boulevard and Washburn Road. Hernandez Martinez was driving a pickup truck eastbound on Beach Boulevard approaching Washburn Road when he made a left turn into DiSpirito and Royce, who were riding motorcycles westbound on Beach Boulevard. Hernandez Martinez crashed into the motorcyclists, killing DiSpirito on scene. First responders attempted lifesaving measures on Royce; he was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. Florida Highway Patrol arrived on scene to assist the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office with the investigation. An FHP trooper saw Hernandez Martinez had bloodshot and watery eyes and a flushed face. First responders transported him to the hospital for his injuries; the trooper could smell alcohol on Hernandez Martinez at the hospital. Hernandez Martinez's toxicology results showed a 0.22 blood alcohol level, nearly three times the legal limit.

Hernandez Martinez did not have a driver's license and was on two active suspensions from a previous DUI and failure to complete basic driver improvement school. Hernandez Martinez is not a legal United States citizen and currently has an ICE hold.

The case was investigated by the Florida Highway Patrol and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney John Kalinowski.