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## Former sheriff's deputy in Passaic County makes bail in child-sex case

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THE RECORD

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A former [Passaic County](#) sheriff's deputy and courthouse guard charged with sexually assaulting a 13-year-old boy posted a \$150,000 property bond Wednesday and was released on bail from the [Bergen County](#) Jail, where he was being held since his arrest last week.

A state judge on Tuesday had reduced bail from \$300,000 to \$150,000 for James Perna, 53, of [Wayne](#), finding the lifelong New Jersey resident to be a low flight risk.

Perna was arrested Feb. 13 on charges of aggravated sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child after his accuser, now 26, told detectives that Perna assaulted him numerous times over eight months in 2000 while they worked together at a store. Some of the attacks occurred inside the store, police have said.

Perna, who has been fired, was one of about 25 officers brought on as part of the Sheriff's Department's Volunteer Special Deputy Sheriff program. The deputies are unpaid — applicants pay about \$5,000 for their training — and must fulfill all the requirements of a regular officer, including attending the police academy and passing background checks. Perna also was hired in June as a temporary security guard at the county courthouse in [Paterson](#), earning \$33,541.

If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison.

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