Lawsuit against former Lebanon County policeman's employers allowed to move on

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By **BARBARA MILLER, The Patriot-News**

ABC 27 NEWS/2007Former police officer Michael Fernsler is serving time for molesting 4-year-old girls and trying to rape a 14-year-old.

A lawsuit filed by parents of two girls assaulted by a former North Londonderry Township police officer will move forward, a U.S. Middle District Court judge decided.

Judge Christopher Conner denied the township's motion to dismiss the suit, filed by parents of two girls who had been molested by Michael Fernsler, a former North Londonderry Township patrolman.

The suit claims that North Londonderry Township police Chief Kevin Snyder and Gordon Watts, township manager, knew Fernsler had viewed child pornography on his police department computer and executed a termination agreement without investigating the misconduct, even though Fernsler was applying to become a foster parent.

"They had no knowledge of any use of township computers to view child pornography," said the township employees' attorney, John Gonzales of King of Prussia. "We strenuously deny these allegations and look forward to

defending them."

Submitted photoMichael Fernsler, a former North Londonderry Township cop, used to do a clown act for community events.

Fernsler, 35, formerly of Annville, was sentenced to 26 to 52 years in prison for molesting the girls, then age 4, in 2006 while visiting their foster home in Swatara Township, Dauphin County.

The day before the sentencing, in November 2007, he abducted and tried to rape a 14-year-old girl. He was sentenced to 12 to 35 years in prison in May 2008 on those charges.

The lawsuit was filed in March 2008.

The judge dismissed a portion of the suit relating to responsibility for the younger girls' foster care, since he said the township had no responsibility in that regard.