

Former Westwego police officer indicted on sex abuse counts

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A former Westwego police officer who had political aspirations for a City Council seat was indicted Thursday on charges of sexually abusing a girl during a 5-year period until he was arrested in June.

Michael Richoux, 49, of Westwego, was indicted by a Jefferson Parish grand jury on two counts of aggravated rape, one count of sexual battery involving a child under age 13 and indecent behavior with a juvenile under age 13. The alleged abuse began around the time of her sixth birthday and ended June 22, when she was 10 years old, according to the bill of indictment.

Richoux was booked by both the Gretna and Westwego police departments for the charges, as the alleged abuse happened in both cities, authorities said.

Richoux would spend the rest of his life in prison, with no chance of parole, if convicted on either of the aggravated rape charges. He is in the Jefferson Parish Correctional Center in Gretna. Judge Ellen Kovach of the 24th Judicial District Court set his bond Thursday at \$1.65 million.

Richoux had been fired by the Westwego Police Department several times since the 1990s, but he was reinstated each time by the Westwego Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board after he appealed the firings. He resigned in May 2006 amid an investigation into allegations he neglected his duties with that office, according to Chief Dwayne Munch. He ran an unsuccessful campaign last year for Westwego's 4th District council seat.

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