

Lake County probation officer faces child porn charges

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2015 Cop probation officer child porn Matthew Gobel

A Lake County probation officer has been charged with several child pornography offenses following a special investigation by the Lake County State's Attorney's Office.

Matthew Gobel, 26, of Morton Grove, turned himself in Friday and was formally charged with solicitation of child pornography, possession and dissemination of child pornography, indecent solicitation of a child and grooming, according to Lake County State's Attorney Michael Nerheim.

He is being held in the Lake County Jail in lieu of \$250,000 bail, with a bond review hearing scheduled Monday.

Gobel has obtained Waukegan defense attorney Elliot Pinsel to represent him. Reached by phone late Friday afternoon, Pinsel said he had nothing to say about the case.

Nerheim said he could not yet answer questions about the facts of the case, including whether the charges involved a juvenile or juveniles Gobel came into contact with through his position.

Nerheim said the Lake County State's Attorney's Office Special Investigations Division was asked to look into allegations of misconduct that came to the attention of the Lake County Probation Department.

The investigation led to the charges against Gobel, Nerheim said.

"These cases are always egregious, but they are particularly troublesome when they involve a betrayal of the public's trust," Nerheim said. "The citizens of Lake County have the right to expect its employees to act in an honest and ethical manner. Any lesser standard will not be tolerated."

Probation officers are employed by the Probation Department of the Lake County Circuit Court.

Gobel faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted of the most serious charges against him. He turned himself in to Lake County Sheriff's officials at the Lake County Jail Friday, but the sheriff's office was not involved in the investigation, Nerheim said.

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