

Controversial judge may retire

(KAIR)--A Leavenworth County District Court judge, whose comments during a 2018 sentencing hearing sparked controversy, may retire.

The Leavenworth Times reports District Judge Michael Gibbens on Monday said, during a hearing, that he is thinking about retirement.

The newspaper reports Gibbens drew criticism last year when he said he considered an underage girl an aggressor in the case of a man who was being sentenced for a charge of electronic solicitation. The girl had been identified as a victim in the case.

Gibbens sentenced Raymond E. Soden to five years and 10 months in prison on December 4, 2018.

Soden had pleaded no contest to the electronic solicitation charge which involved communication Soden reportedly had with a 13-year-old girl through Facebook Messenger, according to a news release County Attorney Todd Thompson issued at the time of the sentencing.

Gibbens granted a departure from what was considered the standard sentence under the state's sentencing guidelines.

The Kansas Legislature this year changed the law that allowed judges to reduce the length of prison sentences by finding that victims of certain crimes contributed to the criminal activity by being an aggressor.

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