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**For Immediate Release – July 1, 2003**

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Public Information  
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**RE:** Ruth De-Oliveira Sentenced to 20 Years Prison  
For Child Abuse of 20 Month Old Daughter

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Ruth De-Oliveira, DOB: 12-1-80, of Conifer, appeared today in the Jefferson County District Court and was sentenced to 20 years in prison for causing a devastating head injury to her 20 month old daughter in October, 2002. In one account, Mrs. De-Oliveira told authorities that she was frustrated and angry and that the child was crying and wanted a drink of her pop. She said she had pushed the child on the forehead so forcefully that it caused her to be thrown several feet into a wall, where she hit her head and then fell to the floor, again hitting her head. In another account she said that she had snapped and hit the child's head repeatedly into the wall.

On April 28, 2003, De-Oliveira pled guilty to reckless child abuse resulting in serious bodily injury, a class three felony. This carries a penalty of a mandatory minimum 10 years in prison and up to 30 years. Prosecutor Steve Jensen agreed a sentence cap of 20 years in prison as part of the plea agreement.

The child, now just over two years old is "neurologically destroyed", according to one neurologist's report referred to at sentencing. She cannot sit up, hold her head up, turn over or stand. She has seizures. She cannot feed herself and has to be fed through a stomach tube. She has limited use of her

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legs and one arm, and one doctor reports that even those are involuntary movements. Caregivers of the child described her as being unhappy and agitated and that she cries a lot and has trouble sleeping. Another doctor said that 60% of her brain has been destroyed. Doctors and physical therapist don't believe she is likely to improve much, but family and caregivers remain hopeful.

Ruth De-Oliveira has no prior criminal history. Sentencing Judge Jack Berryhill listened to her adoptive father describe the challenges she faced coming to the US as a child (age 5). A native of Korea, she had a variety of health issues, learning disabilities and a history of physical and sexual abuse. Prosecutor Steve Jensen says that he took these things into consideration and that it was part of his agreement to cap the maximum prison sentence at 20 years.

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