



September 17, 2026

CONTACT: Taylor Long, Public Information Officer
tlong@fresnocountyca.gov
559-600-4334

DRIVER SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS FOR FATAL DUI CRASH; HAD PRIOR DUI ARREST SIX MONTHS EARLIER

Today, September 17, 2026, Saul Galvez Diaz (25, of Caruthers) was sentenced to 11 years in state prison for gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and two counts of felony driving under the influence causing great bodily injury. The sentence was imposed by the Honorable Robert Mangano of the Fresno County Superior Court following Galvez Diaz's no contest plea on May 6, 2026.

The crash occurred at the intersection of Willow and Floral Avenues, west of the city of Selma, and claimed the life of 28-year-old Michelle Lawrence of Caruthers, who was a passenger in the other vehicle. Lawrence's 10-year-old daughter and her 61-year-old mother were also injured, along with Galvez Diaz's wife, who was 13 weeks pregnant at the time.

On January 4, 2025, shortly after 8:00 p.m., Galvez Diaz was driving a Toyota Camry eastbound on Floral Avenue with his wife, Sifonia Sanchez Carrasco (22, of Caruthers), as a passenger. As he attempted to make a left turn onto Willow Avenue, he failed to yield to an oncoming Nissan Cube traveling westbound on Floral Avenue. Galvez Diaz drove directly into the Nissan's path, causing a head-on collision that resulted in major damage to both vehicles.

The Nissan was driven by Rebecca Kasper (61, of Clovis), with her daughter, Michelle Lawrence, and Lawrence's 10-year-old daughter as passengers. All three occupants of the Nissan, along with Galvez Diaz's wife, were transported to Community Regional Medical Center for emergency treatment. Despite life-saving efforts, Lawrence succumbed to her injuries.

An investigation conducted by the California Highway Patrol determined that Galvez Diaz's blood alcohol concentration was 0.16% approximately two hours after the crash, twice California's legal limit.

Further investigation revealed that just six months before the fatal collision, Galvez Diaz had been arrested by the Fowler Police Department for driving under the influence after being stopped for defective taillights. His blood alcohol concentration in that case was measured at 0.17%.

"The pain caused by impaired driving extends far beyond the crash itself," said Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp. "A young mother lost her life, a child lost her mother, and multiple families will carry the consequences of this defendant's choices forever. This case serves as a tragic reminder that every decision to drive under the influence puts innocent lives at risk."

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office thanks the California Highway Patrol for its thorough investigation and commitment to seeking justice for the victims and their families.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Christopher Moss, with assistance from Senior District Attorney Investigator Randall Paulson. The prosecution was conducted through the Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driver Vertical Prosecution Program, which is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[F25900070]