



IDAHO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES OMBUDSMAN OFFICE



Brad Little-Governor
Trevor Sparrow- Ombudsman

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Boise, ID 83720

February 13, 2026

Official Statement of Review Regarding the Death of Infant Benjamin

The Idaho Health and Social Services Ombudsman Office (HSSO) was contacted by community members, advocacy organizations, and legislators regarding the circumstances surrounding the death of twelve-day-old Benjamin. This tragic loss has deeply affected our community and has prompted thoughtful reflection on how these events occurred and, critically, whether similar outcomes can be prevented in the future.

The HSSO conducted a comprehensive review of the events surrounding Benjamin's death, including the information available to responding agencies and the actions taken in response. This review also examined existing statutes, rules, policies, and procedures governing agency response. Based on this review, it is the opinion of this office that all involved agencies acted in accordance with current law, policy, and procedure. Further, it is our assessment that agencies responded appropriately to the information they received and acted with diligence and urgency within the constraints of existing guidelines in their efforts to locate and ensure the safety of infant Benjamin.

However, the question of preventability remains. It is possible that legislative or policy changes could be considered to adjust the priority level of safety assessments when concerns involve parents or guardians with aggravated circumstances, as defined in Idaho Code § 16-1602(6). While it is not possible to determine with certainty whether such changes would have altered the outcome in Benjamin's case, it is equally difficult to conclude that they would have had no impact. These are important considerations that warrant thoughtful discussion and examination.

Above all, Benjamin's case serves as a call to action for our community. One of the most powerful tools we have to prevent harm is collective vigilance, looking out for one another and speaking up when concerns arise. In this case, individuals did raise concerns and alert authorities, and those efforts matter. Although the outcome was heartbreaking, it must strengthen, not diminish, our shared commitment to protecting children.

Each of us has a role to play. Whether by volunteering at shelters, serving as a mentor, participating on task forces, or simply offering support to families in need, community involvement is essential. By standing together, we can better safeguard our most vulnerable population and protect Idaho's most important asset—our children.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Sparrow".

Trevor Sparrow
Ombudsman