

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2026

Contact: Speaker Mike Moyle & Chairman Bruce D. Skaug

Phone: (208) 332-1111

Email: hspkcos@house.idaho.gov

LEGISLATORS FURIOUS ABOUT BOISE MURDER

House legislative leaders are expressing outrage with the City of Boise in light of a gruesome murder last week.

Ross Wardlaw Jr. is accused of fatally stabbing 25-year-old Boise resident Jordan Harbst early Monday morning, along the Boise Greenbelt path. According to news reports, Wardlaw told police that he was “paranoid” that people on scooters were out to get him.

Boise police arrested Wardlaw on Thursday. Wardlaw has an extensive criminal history, according to news reports. He was also reported to be unlawfully camping regularly in the area where the attack occurred.

“This attack is a tragedy,” said Rep. Bruce Skaug, “But it is even more horrific because it may have been prevented.”

In 2025, the Idaho Legislature passed a S1141a. The law requires cities to enforce bans on camping or overnight stays in public places, and requires cities to clean up such encampments and campers.

“The law was not written to criminalize homelessness,” said House Judiciary and Rules Committee Chairman Bruce Skaug, who co-sponsored the bill with Sen. Codi Galloway. “The law was written to protect citizens from mentally unstable people who camp in public places. If the City of Boise had followed the law, that young man would likely be alive. My heart goes out to the victim's family. They should consider hiring a wrongful death attorney for possible action against the City of Boise.”

Legislative leaders said the law is clear, and want to know why the camping ban has not been enforced along the greenbelt and city parks.

“The law doesn’t need to be strengthened or changed — it just needs to be followed,” said Speaker of the House Mike Moyle. “Idahoans who use the Boise greenbelt, float the Boise River or visit a downtown restaurant should not have to fear for their safety because Boise Mayor Lauren McLean won’t follow the law. We are a nation of laws, and Idahoans expect our public officials to follow the law. It is sad and infuriating to see a possibly preventable crime occur because Boise won’t enforce the law.”

Moyle and Skaug have requested and been assured, by the Idaho Attorney General, that potential legal options against the City of Boise are being reviewed.

###