



Wagstaff & Cartmell

Lawsuit Filed by Idaho Murder Victims' Families Seeks Accountability from Washington State University

January 7, 2026—Following the sentencing of Bryan Kohberger in July, newly released law enforcement records and investigative materials have revealed deeply troubling information concerning Washington State University's knowledge of, and lack of response to, Kohberger's repeated misconduct in the months leading up to the murders of Ethan Chapin, Kaylee Goncalves, Xana Kernodle, and Madison Mogen.

These materials show that Washington State University received a substantial number of alarming complaints about Kohberger while he was a graduate student and a university employee. Multiple individuals reported behavior that was described as stalking, threatening, predatory, and deeply concerning. Women feared for their safety around him, required routine escorts to their vehicles when he was present, and developed informal warning systems to protect one another when interactions with Kohberger were unavoidable.

Despite the volume, seriousness, and consistency of these reports, and despite existing policies and procedures designed to identify and address threats to campus safety, a lawsuit (Goncalves, et al. v WSU) filed today in a Washington State Superior Court aims to prove that the university failed to take meaningful or timely action. The lawsuit seeks damages from Washington State University for violations of Title IX, the federal

law that prohibits sexual harassment and stalking in public universities, and for its negligence and failure to protect the community at large.

Attorneys for the victims' families say that despite the plethora of information about Kohberger, including numerous reports that he was stalking students and other women, he remained employed by Washington State University, housed in university-provided accommodations, and continued to have access to students and university resources until well after the murders occurred.

According to the families' attorneys:

“The information now coming to light paints a disturbing picture of institutional inaction in the face of repeated and dire warnings. These failures were not the result of a lack of authority or available safeguards, but rather a breakdown in accountability and responsibility at critical moments. The victims' families have come together with a shared purpose to seek transparency, accountability, and meaningful reform. This effort is not about vengeance or speculation. This is about ensuring that institutions entrusted with the safety of young people take threats seriously and act decisively when warning signs are present.”

The law firms of Wagstaff & Cartmell LLP and Pfau Cochran Vertetis Amala PLLC represent the victims' families, who will have no further comments at this time.

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