



CHILD WELFARE OMBUDSMAN

Child Welfare Ombudsman Responds to Recent Child Deaths

June 24, 2021

AUGUSTA—In response to the recent child deaths in Maine, the Child Welfare Ombudsman, Christine Alberi, offers the following comment:

“All children in Maine deserve safe homes and the protection of a strong child welfare system. The recent loss of four young Maine children is tragic and deserves a full and thorough investigation. For years, the Child Welfare Ombudsman’s office, along with the Office of Child and Family Services’ own internal Quality Assurance Department, have both consistently found serious practice issues that directly affect child safety. The Ombudsman’s office has highlighted the ongoing struggle to make safety decisions for children at both the beginnings and ends of cases, often due to lack of ongoing assessments of families. We welcome the expertise of Casey Family Services and we will continue to our mission to advocate for improvements for all Maine children that are now at risk, in state custody, or otherwise living difficult and precarious lives.”

In addition to participating in the reviews of the four child deaths with Casey Family Services, the Ombudsman will also be conducting independent reviews of three of the four deaths, in the same manner as case specific reviews are performed as part of normal Ombudsman program activity. The deaths occurred on June 20 in Stockton Springs, on June 17 in Temple, on June 6 in Old Town, and on June 1 in Brewer.

Maine’s Child Welfare Ombudsman Program is an independent non-profit authorized by 22 M.R.S.A. § 4087-A to provide information and referrals to individuals requesting assistance with child welfare and perform case-specific reviews of child welfare involvement. Under the statute the Ombudsman also has a duty to analyze and provide opinions and recommendations to agencies, the Governor and the Legislature on state programs, rules, policies, and laws.

For more information please contact Christine Alberi 207-215-9591