Volume 1 Issue 3

UTRSOL Monthly

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws
September 2026

September was a month of expansion for UTRSOL. The organization launched its Chamber of Commerce for registrant business owners, advanced AfterMath Alliance toward formal state recognition as a peer support program, engaged the Utah Sentencing Commission on two rounds of major guideline changes, tracked a Board of Pardons and Parole appointment through to the Governor's desk alongside a newly opened Utah State Board of Education vacancy, and deepened its coalition footprint with the Department of Corrections, the Department of Criminal Justice, and victim-services organizations statewide. This recap consolidates five weekly issues (Vol. 1, Issues 9–13 of UTRSOL Weekly) into a single track-by-track summary of the month.

ORGANIZATIONAL MILESTONES

UTRSOL formally launched the UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce this month, a peer network for registrants who own and operate their own businesses in Utah. Built for mutual support, referrals, and shared problem-solving around the specific challenges of running a business while on the registry, from vendor relationships to public-facing marketing, the Chamber started with eight founding members spanning technology, transportation advocacy, food and beverage, and specialty manufacturing. It joins AfterMath Alliance and the UTRSOL Housing Authority referral network as a third standing program built directly around the practical, everyday barriers this community navigates, with dedicated pages now in development and a first in-person meetup planned for October 17. Separately, the AfterMath Alliance Foundation's 501(c)(3) filing continued to progress with UTRSOL's attorney over the course of the month.

LEGISLATIVE TRACK: 2027 SESSION

On September 30, Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 1267 into law, enacting a complete ban on child marriage with no exceptions, making it the eighteenth state in the country, and the second in 2026 behind Oklahoma, to abolish underage marriage. UTRSOL marked the occasion with a policy piece on News From The Wire examining California's new law alongside Utah's own unfinished history on the issue, and sent coordinated outreach to nine Utah legislators and two victim services organizations inviting them to engage with the complete-ban legislation UTRSOL has drafted for the 2027 General Session. Utah's current law still allows narrow exceptions for minors to marry; UTRSOL believes this is the moment to close them for good. UTRSOL supports a complete ban because child marriage is a legal route to the very harms Utah's sex offense laws exist to prevent. Because our work follows the evidence on where harm begins, we believe the most effective policy is upstream, closing the exceptions that let abuse become legal.

SENTENCING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT

On September 2, UTRSOL provided public comment at the Utah Sentencing Commission meeting where members voted to adopt presumptive-prison sentencing guidelines for several offense categories, including CSAM possession, enticement of a minor, forcible sexual abuse, and a broader list of serious second-degree offenses. State fiscal projections presented at the meeting estimate the change could add as many as 390 additional inmates and roughly twenty million dollars annually in corrections costs at full implementation; UTRSOL's comment focused on grounding sentencing policy changes of this scale in recidivism data and on ensuring the Legislature, not just the Commission, bears visible accountability for the resulting costs and outcomes.

At the Commission's September 17 meeting, members unanimously adopted updated juvenile sentencing guidelines and approved revisions to the financial offense matrix. Of particular note to UTRSOL's work, the Commission added new sex offense categories to its guideline addendum, including aggravated sexual extortion and distribution of apparent CSAM, formalizing sentencing guidance for offense categories that were restructured during the 2026 General Session. UTRSOL is continuing to track how these implementation level changes play out in practice.

APPOINTMENTS TRACKED: BOPP AND USBE VACANCIES

UTRSOL continued tracking the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) vacancy throughout the month, encouraging supporters to send individual letters of support directly to CCJJ and the Governor's office, including incarcerated individuals writing on their own behalf, and saw support for the effort come in from unexpected places. The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's subcommittee narrowed a pool of roughly 46 applicants down to five finalists and sent that list forward under the Commission's direct-recommendation authority to Governor Cox following board member Melissa Stirba's June 18 resignation. As of month's end, UTRSOL was still awaiting an announcement from the Governor's Office, with a decision expected sometime in October.

Separately, a vacancy opened on the Utah State Board of Education in District 2 (Weber County) following a board member's resignation on September 21. Filling a USBE vacancy follows a different process than the Board of Pardons: the Governor appoints a qualified replacement to serve out the unexpired term from three nominees advanced by the Utah Republican Party's central committee, with the appointment then requiring confirmation by the State Senate. The sudden departure of the Republican incumbent reshaped the race for District 2, leaving Democrat Kacee Weaver as the sole certified candidate on the ballot for the November elections. The new member will be seated only until January 2, when Kacee Weaver, following the Republican incumbent's sudden departure, will assume the seat after the November elections. UTRSOL will follow up once a candidate is selected to complete the vacancy.

AFTERMATH ALLIANCE: TOWARD STATE RECOGNITION

UTRSOL continued laying the groundwork this month for AfterMath Alliance's path toward formal recognition as a population-specific peer support program under Utah's administrative code governing peer support certification. The organization plans to petition the state's Office of Substance Use and Mental Health for population-specific guidelines once AfterMath Alliance has established six to twelve months of programming, with a target filing date of April 2027. The program's current group facilitators, both in-person and virtual, are Certified Peer Support Specialists under Utah's existing credentialing framework, giving the program a strong clinical foundation as it works toward recognition.

EDUCATION POLICY ENGAGEMENT: USBE

On September 4, the Utah State Board of Education voted 10-2-3 to direct staff to work with legislators toward a statutory change to Utah Code 53-29-306 on registry-related restrictions for school property and school-sponsored activities, heading into the 2027 General Session, moving the issue from a Board rulemaking process into an active legislative push. UTRSOL's position has not changed from its first interaction with the Board: it believes targeted administrative rulemaking is the proportionate way to close the specific coverage gap that prompted the proposal, and has flagged unaddressed conflicts between the proposal and existing law, including Utah's AP&P supervision framework and the statute governing a registered parent's ability to accompany their own child. UTRSOL noted that the two no votes and three abstentions on the fifteen-member board reflect real, unresolved disagreement rather than a unified mandate, meaning any legislative sponsor who takes this up will be doing so without the Board fully behind them.

Ahead of the Board's October 1 meeting, UTRSOL submitted Section I of a planned four-part analytical memorandum series examining the statutory framework of the proposal, with the remaining sections to follow at upcoming board meetings. On October 1, UTRSOL delivered in-person public comment summarizing the memorandum's analysis and offering to work with USBE policy staff and General Counsel as the Board prepares its legislative request ahead of the 2027 session.

COALITION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

UTRSOL's housing and reentry network continued to grow this month. The organization met with a parallel housing and reentry organization in Weber County to exchange referral practices and discuss shared interest in reforming the Good Landlord Program during the 2027 session, along with the possibility of a Weber County host site for AfterMath Alliance; presented UTRSOL's housing data and landlord referral network to Utah Case Management, exploring how the agency's Medicaid-funded deposit and household-setup assistance could pair with UTRSOL's referral network; connected with a new transitional housing partner in downtown Salt Lake City offering no-background-check, AP&P-approved rooms, with a site visit scheduled to explore a two-way referral relationship; and continued building out a

cluster of faith-based transitional service contacts spanning several Utah counties as the organization expands into Utah County. UTRSOL also reached out to the Rental Housing Association of Utah regarding sponsorship for its property management summit, and to the VA's Health Care for Re-entry Veterans program to explore serving justice-involved veterans across Weber, Davis, and Salt Lake counties.

On the institutional side, UTRSOL sat down with leadership at the Department of Criminal Justice to discuss its ongoing engagement with the state's criminal justice commissions, affirming a multi-track approach across housing, employment, clinical research, and public communications. Late in the month, the Utah Department of Corrections' Advocacy Stakeholder group approved UTRSOL's application to be seated at its monthly meetings beginning October 13, giving UTRSOL a standing seat alongside other advocacy organizations to raise reentry and prison-policy priorities directly with UDC leadership. The Sex Offense Task Force declined UTRSOL's request to attend its quarterly SOTP provider training, since that content is specialized for those working directly with the offense population in a treatment or supervision role rather than a broader advocacy audience, though the request opened a constructive dialogue with Task Force leadership that UTRSOL expects to build on.

UTRSOL also continued tracking the availability of reentry resource fairs across several Utah counties, noting that events in Cache, Box Elder, and Tooele Counties have quietly lapsed in recent months, and is looking at where it might be able to help keep such events going. While UTRSOL did not get a chance to participate in the Weber County Community Reentry Coalition's annual Reentry Simulation event this month, the organization remains committed to supporting the Coalition's work and is preparing an application to join, subject to the Coalition's scheduled November meeting and vote.

On the victim-services side, UTRSOL attended the opening day of UCASA's 12th Annual Utah Sexual Violence Conference in Midvale on September 10, where it learned of H.B. 459 from the 2026 General Session, a bill that would have ended Utah's unique requirement that healthcare providers report an adult sexual assault survivor's name and contact information to law enforcement following a rape exam. Utah remains the only state in the country with this requirement, and the bill failed to advance amid pushback from law enforcement, though UTRSOL expects it to be revisited in 2027.

The organization sees a direct connection to its own registry argument, since mandatory reporting suppresses genuine disclosure and the resulting undercount gets invoked rhetorically as the kind of unquantifiable fear used to justify tougher registry restrictions. UTRSOL closed out the month by attending the Victim Services Commission's annual meeting on September 30, where it observed discussion of the Commission's long-term funding study and its 2027 legislative planning process, anchored in the 2026 Victim Services Study published by the Department of Criminal Justice.

POLICY JOURNALISM: NEWS FROM THE WIRE

UTRSOL's policy publishing arm, News From The Wire, published five pieces this month. Following UTRSOL's attendance at the Utah Trafficking in Persons Conference, NFTW published "UTIP Conference In Review," examining a case the Attorney General's Office highlighted as a trafficking prosecution success story and noting that Utah's registry framework and trafficking statutes were built somewhat independently of each other, alongside a companion piece summarizing broader conference takeaways.

In response to the Victim Services Commission's August 26 meeting, NFTW examined the emerging push for a fourth Utah offender registry, this one for domestic violence, using Tennessee's "Savanna's Law" as the only existing national model. A comprehensive piece on the September 2 Sentencing Commission meeting walked through the specific reasoning offered by dissenting commissioners and drew out a constitutional distinction between the Board of Pardons and Parole, which the Utah Constitution insulates from legislative direction, and statutory bodies like the Sentencing Commission, which the Legislature can direct or override at will.

A two-part piece, "The Legislature Wants Its Voice, Not Its Citizens" and "An Agency With No Independence From Its Creator," examined how citizen and independent-advocate representation on Utah's criminal justice commissions has changed in recent years, drawing on UTRSOL's own Institutional Analysis publication alongside public meeting records spanning several legislative sessions. Finally, "Utah's Black Box: An Unquantifiable Fear" examined how Utah's registry policy is repeatedly justified by public fear that no agency has actually measured, pointing to H.B. 89 (which banned polygraph tests for sexual assault survivors) and the restricted-reporting proposal in H.B. 459 as steps toward bringing that unknown into view.

LOOKING AHEAD: OCTOBER & BEYOND

October

- October 8 — Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice Meeting
- October 13 — UDC Advocacy Stakeholders Group Meeting
- October 14 — Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH)
- October 17 — UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce First Meetup [Virtual]
- October 19 — Senate Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Confirmation Committee (Board of Pardons and Parole appointment)
- October 21 — Judiciary Interim Committee
- October 21 — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Hearing
- October 21 — Presentation to UDC's Second Chance Employer Network, The Hive
- October 29 — Utah State Board of Education Public Comment Sign-Up Deadline

November

- November 3 — Election Day
- November 4 — Weber County Community Reentry Coalition Meeting
- November 5 — Utah State Board of Education Meeting
- November 10 — UDC Advocacy Stakeholder Meeting
- November 18 — Judiciary Interim Committee
- November 18 — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Hearing

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UTRSOL is an evidence-based policy research and advocacy organization. This newsletter is distributed to external partners, coalition members, and stakeholders to share updates on our research, legislative activities, and organizational initiatives.