

Volume 1 Issue 2

UTRSOL Monthly

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

August 3 – August 28, 2026

August was a month of delivery for UTRSOL. The Clinical Research Working Group's months-long review culminated in the formal transmittal of Publication 2026-39 to the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (LECJ) Interim Committee, AfterMath Alliance held its first in-person and virtual sessions and began building toward formal state recognition, UTRSOL tracked a new Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy through to its five finalists, and the organization expanded its coalition footprint through Sex Offense Task Force outreach, the Utah Trafficking in Persons Conference, and public comment before the Victim Services Commission. This recap consolidates all four weekly issues (Vol. 1, Issues 5–8 of UTRSOL Weekly) into a single track-by-track summary of the month.

ORGANIZATIONAL MILESTONES

Early in the month, UTRSOL's affiliate status with its national partner organization, NARSOL (National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws), was officially confirmed following a multi-week review of UTRSOL's governance documents and organizational history, connecting UTRSOL to NARSOL's national network of state-level advocacy organizations and a stronger collective voice on registry reform issues nationwide.

Later in the month, UTRSOL began the formal process of filing for 501(c)(3) status under the AfterMath Alliance Foundation, UTRSOL's planned charitable arm for direct-service programs. UTRSOL's attorney is finalizing updated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the Foundation, and the organization is working through the associated filing fees as it prepares to submit, a structure intended to let AfterMath Alliance and future direct-service programs operate on solid organizational footing, distinct from UTRSOL's advocacy and policy work.

LEGISLATIVE TRACK: 2027 SESSION

On Wednesday, August 26, the California State Assembly voted unanimously to pass Assembly Bill 1267, raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions; barring a veto by Governor Newsom, the bill will become law midnight after August 31. Absent a signature, California would become the 18th state to enact a complete child marriage ban and the 2nd state this year, behind Oklahoma, with Ohio potentially becoming the 19th state (3rd this year) this fall.

That development sharpened UTRSOL's own push for identical legislation in Utah. The organization has drafted a bill establishing an absolute minimum marriage age of 18 with

no exceptions, mirroring the complete prohibition Rep. Angela Romero first introduced as H.B. 234 in 2019 before it was amended into the framework Utah still operates under today. The bill rests on an upstream-prevention logic: child marriage is a documented precursor to domestic violence, sexual coercion, and economic dependency, the same conditions Utah's victim service organizations spend considerable resources addressing after the fact. UTRSOL frames a complete ban as addressing those harms before they occur, an upstream act of prevention in contrast to downstream instruments like registries, which are built to manage harm already done.

LEcj INTERIM STUDY ITEM 3: PUBLICATION 2026-39 TRANSMITTED

Early in the month, UTRSOL's Clinical Research Working Group (CRWG) completed its review of Part II of "The Registry's Reach: Purpose, Composition, and the Case for Systematic Review," with clinical reviewers submitting substantive feedback including corrections to the clinical instrument inventory, added citations supporting key claims, and confirmation that the document's core arguments hold up against current clinical practice.

The following week, the last outstanding reviewer comments came in; UTRSOL's team worked through the weekend to fold that feedback into the document, and a final version was completed and prepared for transmittal. Although the report's release had originally been tied to the LECJ Interim Committee's agenda timing for Study Item 3, the August 19 hearing did not ultimately include that item, so UTRSOL chose to release the report as planned rather than hold it, giving the Committee and its full distribution list adequate time to review it ahead of discussion in the months ahead. This first version is released as Edition 1, with future editions planned to incorporate additional expert review as the CRWG continues to grow.

On Monday, August 17, UTRSOL officially transmitted Publication 2026-39 to the LECJ Interim Committee and a distribution list of over sixty stakeholders across Utah state government and the advocacy community, capping months of work from individual clinical reviews through structured comment resolution to a final round of corrections. Study Item 3 remains an approved 2026 study item whose scheduling is determined by the committee's chairs, Sen. Calvin R. Musselman and Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox; the three remaining meetings of the interim are scheduled for September 16, October 21, or November 18.

AFTERMATH ALLIANCE: LAUNCH AND BUILDING TOWARD RECOGNITION

Ahead of its August 14 launch, UTRSOL finalized promotional flyers for AfterMath Alliance's first meeting and standing sessions, began outreach to partner organizations to spread the word to clients who could benefit from a support group, and refined the member handbook, clarifying the policy for an adults-only, 18-and-over space and adding language describing the hybrid in-person/virtual meeting format. UTRSOL is also working toward a second, complementary in-person support group for non-justice-impacted family members who support a registrant loved one.

AfterMath Alliance held its very first in-person meeting on Friday, August 14. In the days leading up to it, interest came in through multiple independent channels, including a direct call from a prospective attendee finishing treatment through Utah's approved sex offense program who has already expressed interest in volunteering with the group down the road. Virtual/phone sessions launched August 19, giving members without reliable transportation or internet access a second way to participate; a call-in number is available by request through UTRSOL's contact line.

Beyond running its regular sessions, held the first and third Wednesday of each month virtually, and the second and fourth Friday of each month in person, UTRSOL spent time laying groundwork for AfterMath Alliance's long-term future. The organization is researching a formal state administrative rulemaking pathway that would recognize AfterMath as its own population-specific peer support model, a process that typically requires six to twelve months of stable, documented operation before a petition can be filed; UTRSOL is using this early period to build that track record deliberately. The AfterMath Handbook was also distributed to the facilitator team this month.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE: VACANCY TRACKING

UTRSOL learned of a new vacancy on the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) during the August 13 CCJJ meeting, created by member Melissa Stirba's departure to the Third District Court. The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) began reviewing an applicant pool that ultimately closed at roughly forty-six applicants. UTRSOL's position is that a board historically skewed toward a prosecutorial background benefits from members who bring behavioral health, social work, advocacy, and defense-law perspectives to the table, the same reasoning that guided the organization's involvement in the 2025 vacancy, when Brett Varoz was ultimately selected from a similar five-candidate slate.

On August 26, CCJJ publicly announced its five finalists: Lisa Crawford, a private-practice attorney already serving on the Board pro tempore; Clint Heiner, a Deputy District Attorney with Salt Lake County's Family Sexual Violence Unit; Armanda Mercado, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Utah Department of Corrections; Kelly Perri, a Lead Senior Hearing Officer and Mental Health Liaison at BOPP; and Bruce Pickett, a Section Director with the Utah Attorney General's Office. A correction to earlier reporting: UTRSOL previously described a formal public comment period as part of this process, but because CCJJ sends its recommendations directly to the Governor under Utah Code 77-27-2(3), there is no formal public comment window, though the agency can still take public input into account. Consistent with the criteria UTRSOL laid out earlier in the month, backgrounds in behavioral health, social work, and reentry work all appear somewhere in this slate. UTRSOL has reviewed each candidate and determined which one to focus its advocacy on supporting, with a call to action naming that candidate expected the following week.

EMPLOYMENT TRACK: BRIDGING STATE PROGRAMS

UTRSOL identified the Utah Department of Workforce Services' standing point of contact for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program and began exploring a structural connection between WOTC's employer incentive program and the Utah Department of Corrections' Second Chance Employer Network. The two state programs share a common purpose, connecting employers with tax and bonding incentives to justice-involved job seekers, but currently operate without any formal relationship despite years of running on parallel tracks. If successful, UTRSOL hopes this connection could meaningfully expand the pool of employers actively seeking to hire people with a criminal history.

EDUCATION POLICY ENGAGEMENT: USBE RULEMAKING

UTRSOL took its education policy work to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) directly this month, providing in-person public comment at the full Board meeting on August 6 regarding a legislative request proposing a permanent statutory amendment to registry-related restrictions on school property and school-sponsored activities, followed by a second in-person comment to the Board's Law and Licensing Committee on August 7. UTRSOL's position has been consistent: it supports closing the specific background-check gap that prompted the request through targeted administrative rulemaking, but opposes escalating that fix into a permanent statutory change that reaches beyond the incident that prompted it and isn't supported by evidence of an actual child-safety gap. UTRSOL also identified an unaddressed conflict between the proposed language and existing state law governing a registered parent's ability to accompany their own child, and offered to work with Board staff to help resolve it. As of this month, the Law and Licensing Committee has left the item pending on the agenda rather than issuing a recommendation, and UTRSOL will continue engaging as the matter moves toward the 2027 legislative session.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: NEWS FROM THE WIRE

UTRSOL's investigative publishing arm, News From The Wire, published five new pieces this month, each examining a different institutional pattern within Utah's justice and policy systems. The first, published [August 11](#), examines a practice in one Utah county in which prosecutors routinely notified an outside law firm representing a religious institution whenever a bishop submitted a character letter on behalf of a defendant at sentencing, raising a due-process and institutional-entanglement question about whose voices reach the sentencing record freely. The second, published [August 12](#), looks at a broader pattern across several recent Utah legislative sessions in which lawmakers have sponsored registry-related reform or restriction bills at politically consequential moments in their own careers, examining whether the timing of registry-policy engagement tends to track political calculation as much as evidence, while staying focused on documented sequences and public statements rather than speculation about private motivations. The third, published [August 13](#), traces the statutory history of Utah's existing registry laws as they relate to further restrictions on registrants based on single-incident cases. Together, these pieces

reflect NFTW's consistent approach: independent, systems-level analysis grounded in public documentation and verifiable sourcing, kept editorially separate from UTRSOL's own advocacy positions.

COALITION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

UTRSOL formally requested inclusion in the Sex Offense Task Force's (SOTF) quarterly training meetings, which bring together approved treatment providers and state agency staff; reached out to the Board of Pardons and Parole's Monthly Outreach Committee to request a seat alongside groups like the ACLU of Utah and Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN); and requested a standing invite to the Utah Department of Corrections' monthly advocacy meetings on prison and parole issues.

On the housing and reentry side, UTRSOL learned that Cache County's long-running reentry resource fair and Tooele County's reentry fair have both been formally discontinued due to low attendance, leaving roughly 450 registrants across the two counties without a dedicated in-person touchpoint for housing, employment, and treatment resources, a gap UTRSOL believes is worth the effort to close. The organization began coordinating with a faith-based reentry support network whose district spans several Utah counties, with new locations opening soon in Utah County, on exchanging housing and reentry resources. UTRSOL also deepened its partnership with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities' statewide housing team and accepted an invitation to present its work directly to a case management team that has referred clients in the past.

UTRSOL attended the 2026 Utah Trafficking in Persons (UTIP) Task Force Conference at the Capitol on August 25 and 26, co-hosted by the Asian Association of Utah (AAU) and the Utah Attorney General's Office, attending strictly as learners given how directly the trafficking-survivor population intersects with UTRSOL's own legislative work. The conference answered a standing open question precisely: labor trafficking convictions in Utah require registration on the same Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry as any other registrable offense — classified under the registry's "kidnap offender" category rather than its "sex offender" category, but subject to identical public listing, community notification, and residency and employment restrictions either way. UTRSOL also used the conference to reconnect with AAU's new team following a staff transition and to revisit shared areas of interest at the intersection of labor trafficking and Utah's sex offense registry.

On August 26, UTRSOL provided public comment at the Victim Services Commission (VSC)'s August meeting regarding an emerging proposal, reported by St. George News on May 31, for a new domestic-violence offender registry titled "Morgan's Law" The proposal, championed by South Utah advocates and backed by a Change.org petition along with support from Washington County officials and law enforcement, has come up at the VSC's June and August meetings; Commission members indicated they've been in dialogue with

the bill's likely legislative sponsor, who appears to be exploring an alternative to a standalone registry. UTRSOL's comment cautioned that Utah lacks a consistent, evidence-based process for evaluating whether a new registry is the right tool, pointing to the state's existing white collar, child abuse, and sex offense registries as examples of the same pattern repeating as the state considers whether and how to build one for domestic violence. UTRSOL also attended a Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) training on digital sexual abuse and exploitation on August 28, presented by a therapist and founding member of an international anti-exploitation organization, continuing the organization's practice of showing up to survivor-services programming rather than engaging that community only from the policy side.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

UTRSOL continued to hear directly from families across Utah this month navigating the collateral effects of a loved one's justice involvement, including questions about incarceration review processes, transfer requests, and support resources for family members. These conversations reflect a need that extends well beyond registrants themselves, and reaching their families remains central to UTRSOL's mission; the organization continues to log these conversations to make sure no one who reaches out falls through the cracks.

LOOKING AHEAD: SEPTEMBER & BEYOND

Early September

- September 2 — Utah Sentencing Commission
- September 2 — Weber County Community Reentry Coalition Meeting
- September 10-11 — Utah Sexual Violence Conference
- September 11 — Salt Lake Housing Stability Division HEART Tabling at Library Square

September

- September 16 — LECJ Interim Session (potential registrable offense discussion)
- September 16 — UDC Presentation to Second Chance Employment: The Hive
- September 29 – October 1 — UDC Ranger Simulation

October

- October 16 — Sex Offense Task Force (SOTF) Quarterly Provider Training
- October 21 — LECJ Interim Session

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.