

UTRSOL WEEKLY

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

Week of August 24 – August 28, 2026

This week, we attended the Utah Trafficking in Persons (UTIP) Conference as learners, watched the Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy move to its finalist stage, attended the Victim Services Commission's (VSC) August meeting where we provided public comment on an active coalition push to establish a public-facing domestic violence offender registry, and continued building coalition relationships across the victim-advocacy and reentry communities. Here's the rundown, track by track.

UTIP CONFERENCE: LISTENING AND LEARNING

UTRSOL attended the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force Conference at the Capitol on August 25 and 26, hosted by Asian Association of Utah (AAU) and the Utah Attorney General's Office. We sat in on sessions covering trafficking prosecutions, survivor-centered practice, and investigative methodology. We went in strictly as learners, given how directly this population intersects with our own work: nearly half of the AAU's case management clients are labor trafficking survivors, and one of our own open legislative questions is how labor trafficking convictions interact with Utah's registry.

That question got a precise answer this week: 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 the identical public listing, community notification, and residency and employment restrictions either way. The label differs; the registration obligation does not. Following a staff transition, we had the chance to reconnect with the Asian Association of Utah's new team to establish direct lines of communication and revisit the shared areas of interest we had previously identified at the intersection of labor trafficking and Utah's sex offense registry.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE: FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

On August 26, the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) publicly announced its five finalists for the current Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy: 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 brief correction to what we shared in earlier issues: we previously described a formal public comment period as part of this

process. Since this is a process where CCJJ sends recommendations directly to the Governor, there isn't a formal public comment period, but the agency can still take public input into account. Consistent with the criteria we laid out last week, background in behavioral health, social work, and reentry work all appear somewhere in this slate. We've reviewed each candidate closely and made our determination of who to focus our advocacy in supporting. A call to action will go out in the next week releasing the name of our selected candidate.

COALITION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

UTRSOL provided public comment at CCJJ's Victim Services Commission meeting on August 26 regarding an emerging proposal, reported by [St. George News May 31](#), for a new domestic-violence offender registry title "Morgan's Law." The proposal, championed by advocates in South Utah backed by a Change.org petition along with support from Washington County officials and law enforcement, has gained enough traction to come up at the VSC's June and August meetings this year. 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 rather than sponsoring the registry itself. UTRSOL's brief 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 now 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 our practice of showing up to survivor-services programming rather than engaging that community only from the policy side. The training offered a valuable look at how clinicians are adapting their practice to survivors whose abuse had an online component, from trauma-informed telehealth practices to safety planning around future exposure. It's this kind of engagement that builds the relationships and credibility needed for meaningful, lasting reform.

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. Governor Newsom has until midnight Monday, August 31 to sign or veto the bill. Absent a signature, California will become the 18th state in the country to enact a complete child marriage ban and the 2nd state this year behind Oklahoma to do so. Ohio may pull in this fall to become the 19th state to ban child marriage and 3rd state this year.

That development sharpens UTRSOL's own push for identical legislation in Utah. The organization has drafted a bill establishing an absolute minimum marriage age of 18, 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 is grounded in a straightforward upstream 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. A complete ban addresses them before. In this way, the bill also addresses one of the root causes of domestic violence. Banning child marriage is an upstream act of prevention, the opposite of downstream instruments like registries, which are built to manage harm already done. We see the same instinct at work in Utah's approach to domestic violence, and think prevention deserves equal attention.

LOOKING AHEAD

Wednesday September 2 — Weber County Community Reentry Coalition Meeting

Wednesday September 2 — Utah Case Management Presentation

Friday September 4 — Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) Presentation

September

- September 10-11 — Utah Sexual Violence Conference, hosted by UCASA
- September 11 — Salt Lake Housing Stability Division HEART Homeless Resource Fair
- September 14 — Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) Advocacy Outreach
- September 16 — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Hearing
- September 16 — Presentation to UDC's Second Chance Employment, The Hive
- September 29–October 1 — UDC Ranger Simulation

October

- October 14 — Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH)
- October 15 — Sex Offense Task Force (SOTF) Quarterly SOTP provider training
- October 18 — Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) Advocacy Outreach
- October 21 — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Hearing

AfterMath Alliance

- September 2 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [Virtual]
- September 11 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [In-Person]
- September 16 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [Virtual]
- September 25 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [In-Person]
- September 30 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [Virtual]

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.