

UTRSOL WEEKLY

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

Week of September 7 – September 11, 2026

This week, we launched our Call to Action supporting a candidate for the Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy, published new investigative journalism following up on two ongoing stories, and continued expanding our housing and coalition partner network across the Wasatch Front. We also spent Thursday at UCASA's Sexual Violence Conference, where a conversation about mandatory reporting legislation opened up an unexpected connection to our own registry research. Here's the rundown, track by track.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE: CALL TO ACTION

Governor Spencer Cox is still in the process of reviewing the five finalists for the Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy. We should expect to hear his selected candidate for appointment to the Board in the next one to two weeks. Our Call To Action since the release of the finalist list is continuing unabated. We're asking supporters who want to weigh in to send individual letters of support directly to CCJJ and the Governor's office; we're glad to share key points for anyone who would like help getting started, especially incarcerated individuals wanting to write on their own behalf. We were also glad to see support for this effort come in from unexpected places this week, a reminder that this work resonates with people far beyond our usual circle of contacts.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: NEWS FROM THE WIRE

This week, we published a comprehensive piece on the September 2 Sentencing Commission meeting, digging deeper into the two votes adopting presumptive-prison guidelines than we had room for in our three minutes of public comment. The piece walks through the specific reasoning offered by dissenting commissioners, and draws out an important 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.

We also published an updated companion piece on the emerging push for a fourth Utah offender registry, this one for domestic violence, after learning that a bill file has been opened and a working group convened on the issue. The concern here, while not sex offense specific, is directly adjacent to registry creation as a policy tool. We've spent the better part of this year documenting how Utah's sex offense registry expanded well past its original scope without a matching increase in evidence that expansion improves public safety, and we're watching the same pattern take shape again: a registry proposed in response to a specific, tragic case, with little public discussion of whether a registry is actually the right instrument, or just the most visible one. We'll continue tracking this closely as it develops.

COALITION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Our housing and reentry network kept growing this week. We 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. We also continued building out a promising cluster of faith-based transitional service contacts spanning several Utah counties, aimed at consolidating what has so far been a handful of separate relationships into one coordinated partnership as we expand into Utah County. Separately, we reached out to the Rental Housing Association of Utah regarding sponsorship for their upcoming property management summit later this month, given UTRSOL's status as a small, volunteer-run nonprofit.

UCASA SEXUAL VIOLENCE CONFERENCE

On Thursday, September 10, we attended the opening day of the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault's 12th Annual Utah Sexual Violence Conference in Midvale. These conferences give victim advocate organizations a place to learn from each other, and give survivors of sexual violence a voice within that community. These spaces provide our organization direct understanding, knowledge, and resonance with what we see and experience as the need for integration of victim and offender dialogue. These spaces deepen our understanding of the harm survivors have experienced, understanding we carry into our work with the population we serve. That same message, that real accountability and real healing aren't opposites, was voiced independently by keynote speakers at both last month's Utah Trafficking in Persons Conference and again at Thursday's conference, regardless of whether UTRSOL was in the room. We see UTRSOL's work as standing in that space, a bridge between accountability the justice system demands and healing both those who have been harmed and those who have caused harm need in order to move forward.

Thursday informed us 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 we expect it to be revisited in 2027. We see a direct connection to our own registry argument here. Mandatory reporting suppresses genuine disclosure, creating a large population of unreported, uncounted cases. That undercount then gets used rhetorically as an inflated sense of an unknown, uncounted threat becomes exactly the kind of unquantifiable fear legislators point to when justifying tougher restrictions in sex offense legislation. Utah's mandatory-reporting requirement isn't just a victim-services problem, it's part of the same mechanism that fuels overbroad registry expansion, because missing data becomes the justification for blunt, punitive policy. This is the bridge between a victim-advocacy bill and our own legislative thesis, one we can only find by showing up, listening, and synthesizing what we hear against the research we already carry.

LOOKING AHEAD

Wednesday September 16 — AfterMath Alliance Meeting [Virtual]

- Email communications@utrsol.org or call 801-871-5215 to learn more

September

- September 23 — RHA 2026 Single Family Property Management Summit
- September 25 — Governor nominates next BOPP member (approximate date)
- September 29–October 1 — UDC Ranger Simulation

October

- October 5 — UDC Second Chance Career Fair (Ogden)
- 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
- October 21 — Presentation to UDC's Second Chance Employer Network, The Hive

AfterMath Alliance

- 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.