Volume 1 Issue 14

UTRSOL WEEKLY

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

Week of October 5 – October 9, 2026

This week, Governor Cox named a new member of the Board of Pardons and Parole, the UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce grew to eight founding members, and we published three new pieces on News From The Wire. We provided public comment at the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's October 8 meeting and continued preparing for the 2027 legislative session. We also announced a short pause in AfterMath Alliance sessions and look ahead to our first Utah Department of Corrections Advocacy Stakeholders meeting on Tuesday, October 13. Here's the rundown, track by track.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE ENGAGEMENT

On Friday, October 2, Governor Cox appointed Lisa Crawford to the Board of Pardons and Parole, filling the seat vacated by Melissa Stirba's June resignation. Ms. Crawford was one of the five finalists forwarded by the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and has served as a pro tem Board member since 2025; she previously spent roughly 19 years with the Utah County Public Defender Association. Her term runs to February 2028, at which point she is eligible for reappointment to a full five-year term. The appointment is subject to Senate confirmation, first through committee and then by a vote of the full Senate. Her confirmation is scheduled with the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Confirmation Committee for Monday, October 19, 2026. We wish to thank all those who sent out supporting letters in our earlier Call To Action.

EDUCATION POLICY: USBE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

On September 4, the Utah State Board of Education voted to direct staff to work with legislators toward a statutory change to Utah Code 53-29-306, which governs registry-related restrictions on school property and at school-sponsored activities, heading into the 2027 General Session. The proposed expansion would extend those restrictions to school-sponsored activities off school grounds, such as field trips, athletic events, and overnight trips, and could affect registrant parents who attend their own children's activities.

In preparation for the Board's November 5 meeting, UTRSOL sent out a Call to Action asking registrant parents, spouses, and family members to tell the Board what effect the proposed expansion would have on their children. The Board meets at 9:00 AM, with public comment beginning at approximately 9:30 AM. To speak, please send an email to publiccomment@schools.utah.gov by Thursday, October 29 with your name and a request to comment at the November 5 meeting. Those who cannot attend in person may request to comment virtually or submit a written statement to the same address, which will be entered

into the record. Anyone unsure about taking part is welcome to email UTRSOL at communications@utrsol.org, and we will help you decide. We are also preparing a second memorandum on evidentiary standards, following the first memorandum we submitted to the Board earlier this month.

COALITION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We will be following up with leadership of the Weber County Community Reentry Coalition (WCCRC) on membership in the coalition and plan to submit an application in the next few weeks, ahead of its November meeting. Membership would allow us to share our housing research directly with coalition partners and to contribute to the coalition's future efforts.

The coalition held its Reentry Simulation over three days, from September 29 through October 1. Following UTRSOL's July 1 presentation to the coalition, registry-involved participant roles were added to the simulation for the first time. Although UTRSOL was unable to take part, we confirmed to that some participants took on those roles and that the post-exercise debrief addressed the added barriers faced by this population. We remain interested in contributing scenario content and participants to future simulations.

UTRSOL will participate in its first Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) Advocacy Stakeholders meeting on Tuesday, October 13. The group brings advocates together with UDC to discuss conditions inside Utah's prisons and related issues. We plan to listen, learn from the other advocates at the table, and share our housing and reentry research where it is useful. And on October 21, we will present to UDC's Second Chance Employer Network, The Hive, where we plan to share our research on the employment barriers facing people on the registry and how employers can help reduce them.

STATE AND AGENCY ENGAGEMENT: CCJJ

On Thursday, October 8, the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice held its fourth interim meeting, where members were briefed on sentencing guideline changes for sex offenses, including a change for certain second-degree offenses from a presumptive jail term to presumptive prison. The changes carry over from the Sentencing Commission's September 2 meeting and, according to the Speaker of the House, respond to legislative directives under H.B. 274.

UTRSOL provided public comment during the discussion. Following the meeting, we asked the Department of Criminal Justice for the data behind the changes, including how the effective date and fiscal estimates were determined, so that we can offer informed input ahead of the 2027 session. The recommendations now go to the Judiciary Interim Committee for review and, if advanced, to the Legislature during the 2027 session. The Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee also meets that morning, on October 21. UTRSOL is looking to provide public comment during both committees.

NEWS FROM THE WIRE

We published three new pieces on News From The Wire this week. On Monday, we looked at how Utah can be short on victim funding while continuing to spend on prisons. The piece argues that both can be true: prison construction is typically paid for with one-time capital dollars, while victim services depend on ongoing operating funds and on revenue sources, such as court surcharges and federal funds, that have been shrinking.

On Tuesday, we published an examination of the Board of Pardons and Parole vacancy and the limited public notice surrounding it. The piece follows the October 2 appointment of Lisa Crawford, reviews the qualifications she brings to the Board, and describes how little public notice accompanied the process. It makes the case that seats with this much influence over people's lives deserve an open, well-publicized process going forward.

And on Wednesday, Part Three of our series built on public reporting of the Sentencing Commission's September 2 vote. The piece shows that the Speaker of the House has described the sentencing guideline changes as a legislative directive, while a commissioner who voted against them described the same direction from inside the room. It argues that, taken together, the two accounts show legislative intent and agency practice converging, with no independent check between them.

AFTERMATH ALLIANCE

Due to rising costs at our hosting venue, AfterMath Alliance, our peer support program, is pausing both its in-person and virtual sessions for the next two weeks while we adjust our schedule. Virtual meetings will resume once the schedule is set, and in-person meetings will resume once we secure an alternate location. We will announce the resume dates, and the new in-person location once it is secured, through our communications channels and in a future issue of this newsletter. We apologize for the disruption and appreciate everyone’s patience as we work toward a long-term meeting space that keeps the group accessible. Anyone with questions can email communications@utrsol.org or call 801-871-5215.

UTRSOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: GROWING, MEETUP POSTPONED

The UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce, a UTRSOL program connecting registrant-owned businesses for peer support and referrals, grew from five to eight founding member businesses this week. Because not all members could attend, the first meetup originally planned for October 8 has been postponed to Saturday, October 17, and we have established a virtual format so that every founding member can take part. The meeting will open with member introductions, then turn to the challenges members share, such as licensing, banking, and client disclosure, and to what members want the Chamber to become, including referrals, resource sharing, and outside partnerships. Registrant business owners interested in joining can email communications@utrsol.org.

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday October 13 — UDC Advocacy Stakeholders Group Meeting

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

Wednesday October 14 — Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH)
Friday October 17 — UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce First Meetup [Virtual]

October

- 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 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.