Volume 1 Issue 15

UTRSOL WEEKLY

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws
Week of October 12 – October 16, 2026

This week, we sent our report on the 2027 sentencing guidelines package to every member of the Judiciary Interim Committee, took part in our first Utah Department of Corrections Advocacy Stakeholders meeting, met with the Transitional Services leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and held the first meeting of the UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce. We also shared an update on AfterMath Alliance meetings. Here's the rundown, track by track.

STATE AND AGENCY ENGAGEMENT: SENTENCING GUIDELINES

On Thursday, October 15, UTRSOL submitted Publication 2026-63, 2027 Sentencing Guidelines Package: Report to the Judiciary Interim Committee, to the committee's co-chairs, Sen. Todd Weiler and Rep. Karianne Lisonbee, and individually to each committee member, along with a two-page companion brief. The package, which the Sentencing Commission adopted on September 2, would make prison the presumptive starting point for certain second-degree sex offenses that now begin with a jail recommendation. It takes effect only if the Legislature approves it by concurrent resolution during the 2027 session.

Our report brings together what five state agencies have said separately over the past 14 months about prison capacity, sex offense treatment, and funding, and asks the committee to look at those accounts side by side. It does not argue against the penalties themselves. Its central request is that the committee obtain a written fiscal analysis before acting, one that sets the added prisoners against UDC's capacity forecast and treatment capacity. We also spoke on the package's cost constraints during public comment at the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's October 8 meeting. The Judiciary Interim Committee reviews the package on Wednesday, October 21, at 8:30 a.m., with a recommendation expected in November.

We also prepared two-page briefs tailored to county, sheriff, taxpayer, and treatment-provider organizations, so that the report's cost and capacity questions reach the groups best placed to answer them.

STATE AND AGENCY ENGAGEMENT: VICTIM SERVICES

On Wednesday, October 21, at 8:30 a.m., the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (LECJ) Interim Committee will hear the 2026 Victim Services Study, which was added to its agenda on Friday, October 16. On October 5, we sent Rep. Ken Ivory a proposal in connection with the victim services task force he requested to act on the study. The proposal suggests directing penalties that Utah collects from technology platforms over harm to children,

beginning with the $5 million Aylo settlement and a share of payments from the Meta settlement, to victim services as a supplement to base funding, with no new fees on individuals and no reduction in restitution owed to specific victims. Ahead of the hearing, we are converting that proposal into a publication to send to committee members on Monday, October 19.

STATE AND AGENCY ENGAGEMENT: UDC ADVOCACY STAKEHOLDERS

UTRSOL took part in its first UDC Advocacy Stakeholders meeting on Tuesday, October 13, where two UTRSOL representatives gave public comment and asked follow-up questions. The group meets monthly and brings advocates together with UDC leadership; most of the two-hour session addressed conditions inside the prisons raised by other advocates. UTRSOL used its time to ask what education and rehabilitation programming is available in the county jails that house part of Utah's prison population under UDC's Inmate Placement Program, and how delivery of that programming is verified. UDC agreed to add an Inmate Placement Program one-pager and presentation to the agenda for the next meeting on November 10. We are preparing an account of the meeting for a News From The Wire piece.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE ENGAGEMENT

Lisa Crawford's appointment to the Board of Pardons and Parole goes before the Senate Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Confirmation Committee on Monday, October 19. If confirmed by the committee, she will receive a vote before the full Senate, likely to be seated as the next Utah Board of Pardons and Parole member in the next one to two weeks.

EDUCATION POLICY: USBE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Work continues on the Utah State Board of Education's proposed change to Utah Code 53-29-306. This week we heard from several affected families who responded to our Call to Action, and we thank them, and their experiences are informing our work. The second memorandum in our series to the Board, on evidentiary standards, is scheduled for delivery on October 26. The Board meets on November 5 at 9:00 a.m., with public comment beginning at approximately 9:30 a.m. To speak, email publiccomment@schools.utah.gov by Thursday, October 29 with your name and a request to comment. 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 communications@utrsol.org, and we will help you decide.

HOUSING AND REENTRY

On Tuesday, October 13, we met with Transitional Services leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They described themselves as connectors who regularly see the same placement barriers we do, and asked how to refer people to UTRSOL. They also introduced us to several contacts to follow up with, including a Department of Workforce

Workforce Services apprenticeship program, the Church's employment services, and a volunteer group that locates rental housing in Weber and Davis counties. They also offered to arrange a sit-down with leaders of the Weber County Community Reentry Coalition, which supports our planned membership application ahead of the Coalition's November 4 meeting. We sent them our housing application and will follow up with each contact in the coming weeks.

We also continued building our housing referral network in Utah County, where no formal landlord list exists. Following last month's call with a Utah County Adult Probation and Parole supervisor, we reached out to additional property owners and managers about renting to people on the registry. We replied to our contact at the Department of Veterans Affairs and are preparing a one-page overview of our housing and employment services for justice-involved veterans. And on October 21, at 11 a.m. we will present virtually to UDC's Second Chance Employer Network, The Hive Workforce Exhcnage, on the employment barriers facing people on the registry and how employers can help reduce them.

NEWS FROM THE WIRE

On Wednesday, we published At the Limit: The Record Behind Utah's New Sentencing Package, which places the public record on the 2027 guidelines side by side. Drawing on statements made at the Sentencing Commission's September 2 meeting and the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's October 8 meeting, it covers the treatment backlog that controls release, the shortage of prison beds, the parole returns that already fill most prison beds, and how fewer plea deals could affect victims who testify at trial. It notes that no funding source has been named for the added cost.

We are also preparing a piece on the contrast between a city contract cut that furloughed workers at a Salt Lake City second-chance employer and the opening of the state's ARCH Project, a new diversion program for people experiencing homelessness with repeat low-level offenses.

AFTERMATH ALLIANCE

AfterMath Alliance in-person meetings are suspended while we secure a new location, and virtual meetings are paused until interest builds. Due to rising costs, we have ended our use of our hosting facility use space, where the group's in-person meetings have been held since August 14. We are grateful to the IOP for hosting us, and our referral relationship with them continues. We are now looking for a new in-person host in the Salt Lake area, and we will announce the new location and any resumption of meetings through our communications channels and in a future issue of this newsletter. In the meantime, one-on-one peer support is available by phone with a Certified Peer Support Specialist. Anyone interested, or with questions, can email communications@utrsol.org or call 801-871-5215.

UTRSOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: FIRST MEETING

The UTRSOL Chamber of Commerce, a UTRSOL program connecting registrant-owned businesses for peer support and referrals, now with eight founding member businesses, held its first meeting on Saturday, October 17. The meeting was held virtually so that founding members across the Wasatch Front could take part, and registrant business owners joined from across the region. The agenda covered member introductions, shared challenges such as licensing, banking, and client disclosure, and what members want the Chamber to become. We will share next steps with members directly. Registrant business owners interested in joining can email communications@utrsol.org.

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday, October 19 — Senate Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Confirmation Committee (Board of Pardons and Parole appointment)
Wednesday, October 21, 8:30 AM — Judiciary Interim Committee (Sentencing Guidelines Review)
Wednesday, October 21, 8:30 AM — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee (Victim Services Study)
Wednesday, October 21, 11:00 AM — Virtual Presentation to UDC's Second Chance Employer Network, The Hive Workforce Exchange

October

- October 26 — Second Memorandum Delivery to the Utah State Board of Education
- 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 Stakeholders Meeting
- November 18 — Judiciary Interim Committee
- November 18 — Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee
- November 19 — UDC Quarterly Advocacy Group Meeting

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.