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2026 General Session of the
67th Legislature**

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Office of
UTAH FOR RATIONAL SEX OFFENSE LAWS

Digest of UTRSOL Legislative Record 2026 General Session of the 67th Legislature

OVERVIEW

The 2026 legislative session marked the first full year in which Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL) operated as an on-record participant in the state’s legislative process. Rather than advancing a fixed policy agenda, UTRSOL treated the legislative record itself as the central site of engagement—testing the factual premises of proposed laws, assessing the true scale of the problems each bill sought to address, and evaluating whether the proposed responses were proportionate to the evidence presented. The record that follows documents not only the organization’s positions, but the evidentiary conditions under which those positions were formed.

WHO WE ARE

- Utah's only formally organized advocacy voice that consistently demands evidentiary justification for sex offense legislation from a reform perspective.
- We are not a defendant-advocacy organization. We supported punitive legislation — including a propensity evidence rule, sentencing enhancements for child abuse in positions of trust, and a ban on polygraphing sexual assault victims — when the evidentiary basis was sound.
- We function simultaneously as a lobbying presence, a policy research group, and a journalism outlet. No other stakeholder in the 2026 session challenged the factual premises of proposed bills in writing before committee hearings.

2026 SESSION AT A GLANCE

- 16 committee testimonies on 13 bills. Supported 6, opposed 7, 2 conditional support.
- Appeared before House Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice, House Judiciary, and Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice committees.
- Tracked cumulative registry growth across the session: 30 registrable offenses in 2011, 42 entering the session, 46 at its close — a pattern with no governing framework and no review mechanism. That context appeared nowhere else in the legislative record.

THE EVIDENTIARY STANDARD

- Every position applied the same two-part test: Is the problem documented? Is the response proportionate to its actual scope?
- That standard constrained both support and opposition. An evidentiary threshold that consistently yields opposition is a rhetorical device. One that also produces support is a genuine constraint — and the record demonstrates it functions that way.
- We did not supply our critiques of opposed bills from outside arguments. We assembled them from the record the bills had already generated and returned them to the committees.

WHAT THE RECORD DEMONSTRATES

- H.B. 123 (out-of-state registration): We introduced the only quantitative data at any stage of the bill's history — two data points spanning 2005 to 2025 with nothing in between. The sponsor acknowledged on the record that her central “sanctuary state” ranking came from her own unverified research. Both committees passed the bill unanimously.
- H.B. 370 (GPS monitoring, unhoused registrants): We disaggregated the bill's own population estimate and showed the actual prospective enforcement target was 72-87 people, not the hundreds implied. We introduced all GPS cost data in the record — \$2,300-\$5,600 annually per person — because the sponsors did not. The California study cited in support was conducted on a materially different population. Both committees passed unanimously.
- H.B. 110 (Board of Pardons): The sponsor claimed pardon-based registry removals had increased every year since 2021. We documented a 14/83 petition approval rate from a 2019 UDOC presentation and requested current data from the Board, CCJJ, and the sponsor before both hearings. None was produced.
- H.B. 116 (criminal fines): The Utah Sentencing Commission voted 9-3 in favor while members stated on the record the approach was "not very evidence-based." The Victim Services Commission supported the bill while acknowledging it would likely cause prosecutors to plea bargain sex charges down to non-sex offenses. We assembled both admissions from the existing record.

FORWARD TRAJECTORY

- The housing assistance network has generated locally-grounded data on shelter exclusions, Good Landlord Program barriers, and registry homelessness. That data is the kind legislators and staff can cite when advocating for root-cause investment — more useful in 2027 than it was in 2026.
- The 2026 session produced a documented record of bills advanced on unverified premises and institutional endorsements without independent evidentiary review. That record does not expire. A legal action committee positions UTRSOL to pursue in courts the registry reforms the legislature has declined to undertake — operating under a standard of proof that legislative committees are not required to meet.



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To the Members of the 67th Utah Legislature,

Transmitted herewith is our report **UTRSOL Legislative Record for the 2026 General Session of the 67th Legislature** (Publication #2026-25). A digest is found on the pages located in the front of this document. The objectives and scope of the critique are explained in the Introduction.

This report provides a comprehensive account of our testimony serving both as a record of our engagement and a resource for future legislative analysis. It details the bills we supported, opposed, or conditionally endorsed, along with the data, arguments, and procedural recommendations that informed each position.

Sincerely

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

UTRSOL/lm

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Executive Summary

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL) completed the 2026 Utah legislative session with sixteen committee testimonies across thirteen distinct bills. Of those measures, we supported six bills, opposed seven, and extended conditional support to two bills, contingent on the adoption of proposed amendments. Throughout the session, our focus remained on ensuring that all legislation met rigorous evidentiary standards, regardless of political popularity or assumptions about public sentiment.

Despite our name, UTRSOL's actual legislative scope is considerably broader than sex offense registry law alone. Operating across civil rights, criminal justice, and victims' rights issues in Utah, we occupy an underrepresented space in Utah's criminal justice policy: systematic, evidence-focused scrutiny of criminal law expansion. The organization serves simultaneously as a legislative advocate, a policy research group, and a reporting outlet.

The defining characteristic of our advocacy is insistence on evidentiary standards as a threshold condition for policy support, applied regularly regardless of a bill's ideological direction or public appeal. We consistently addressed committees not as an adversary to a bill's stated purpose but as an advocate for the evidentiary standard that purpose deserves.

Our guiding principle is neither pro-defendant nor pro-prosecution — it is the evidentiary standard. We opposed measures we viewed as lacking evidentiary grounding, disproportionate in scope, constitutionally infirm, pretextual in motivation, or administratively unworkable — but backed legislation with a documented factual basis on measures we judged to be well-grounded.

Our opposition testimony followed a recognizable structure: challenge the factual premise, demand supporting data, raise constitutional or legal concerns where applicable, identify root causes or alternatives, and argue against broad statutory solutions to narrowly documented problems. We tracked cumulative registry scope rather than evaluated individual bills in isolation explicitly advocating for a coherent governing policy framework instead of limiting our analysis to case-by-case objections.

Several tactical signatures recurred across our hearings. We deployed data driven arguments and used statements made by a bill's own institutional supporters to surface internal contradictions, forcing committees to either engage with the record or ignore it publicly. We also framed our testimony

around the broader policy architecture, highlighting cumulative effects and advocating for governing principles rather than addressing issues solely on a case-by-case basis.

UTRSOL is not a reflexively oppositional organization, nor is it a traditional civil liberties or offender-advocacy group. Our willingness to support punitive legislation when evidence justifies it — while opposing procedurally weak or evidence-free measures in the same policy space — reflects coherent legislative posture. That consistency is a strategic asset, one that positions us to accumulate credibility over time in ways that purely adversarial advocacy could not.

Organizational Profile

UTRSOL is a Utah-based criminal justice reform advocacy organization founded in April 2025. We maintain a website at utrsol.org and operate an active housing assistance network coordinating between private property owners willing to rent to registered individuals and registrants seeking stable housing. The organization's mission is not registry abolition but registry rationalization: replacing punitive policy direction with evidence-proportionate policy calibrated to empirically documented public safety risk. In all its work, UTRSOL applies a consistent evidentiary standard to evaluate legislation, ensuring that policy decisions are grounded in documented data rather than assumption, rhetoric, anecdotes, or belief systems.

As an organized advocacy voice in the state of Utah, UTRSOL consistently demands evidentiary justification for sex offense legislation from a reform perspective. Submitting written critiques of the factual premises of legislation prior to committee hearings, we identified quantitative discrepancies between sponsor claims and publicly available data, or traced the process by which institutional advisory bodies endorsed bills without independently verifying their evidentiary foundations.

UTRSOL's advocacy is grounded in an evidence-proportionality framework applied consistently throughout all sixteen committee testimonies across thirteen distinct bills. The organization demands verifiable, source-attributed data before accepting a bill's stated premise, challenges responses disproportionate to documented problem scope, and raises constitutional arguments and root-cause alternatives. This framework produces a position set that does not track traditional ideological lines. By prioritizing data and proportionality over partisanship, UTRSOL maintains credibility and influence across a broad range of legislative discussions.

Complete Legislative Record

The table below summarizes our position on every bill we engaged during the 2026 session, with final legislative outcomes, House chamber vote counts where available. An asterisk (*) denotes conditional support — we supported the bill while requesting specific amendments or raising systemic concerns that the record should reflect. Bills are grouped by position: support (green), conditional support (purple), neutral (gray), and opposition (red). PASSED indicates the bill was enrolled; FAILED indicates it died before completing both chambers. A dash in the House Vote column indicates vote counts were not available in the official tracking record.

Bill	Subject	Position	Outcome	Key Argument
H.B. 89	Polygraph Prohibition (SA Victims)	SUPPORT	PASSED	Removes retraumatizing practice that harms victims' trust and participation
H.B. 103	Underage Marriage Amendments	SUPPORT	PASSED	Strong compromise; advocates for complete ban; 16 states have full prohibition
H.B. 205	Substance Use / STEP Courts	SUPPORT	PASSED	No sex offense exclusion in introduced text; substance abuse underlies many offenses
H.B. 346	Child Sexual Abuse – Trust Positions	SUPPORT	FAILED	Clarifies 'positions of special trust'; aligns law with documented risk profile
S.J.R. 1	Prior Sexual Conduct Evidence (404(d))	SUPPORT	PASSED	Allows pattern-of-behavior evidence; mandatory defense notice; prevents repeat offenders evading accountability
H.B. 289	AI-Generated CSAM	SUPPORT (cond.)	PASSED	Supports goal; registry grows 42→45; terms like 'apparent' lack nuance;
H.B. 110	Board of Pardons Pardon	OPPOSE	PASSED	State constitutional grounds; strips Board's Article 7 discretion
H.B. 114	Adult-Oriented Performance Amendments	OPPOSE	FAILED	Criminalizes broad expression without intent requirement
H.B. 116	Criminal Fines Amendments	OPPOSE	FAILED	No evidence fines at specific amounts deter; prosecutors will plea-bargain sex charges
H.B. 123	Out-of-State Registration Amendments	OPPOSE	PASSED	Disproportionate response; no evidence of systemic judicial error
H.B. 134	Offender Transfer Amendments	OPPOSE	PASSED	Fee barriers create recidivism risk; NCIC lacks accuracy safeguards
H.B. 370	GPS Monitoring – Unhoused Registrants	OPPOSE	PASSED	3 documented absconders vs. 72–97 estimate; automated warrants over individualized
H.C.R. 2	Sentencing Guidelines Resolution (2027)	OPPOSE	PASSED	Rubber-stamps 2027 guidelines without public debate; weakens oversight of sentencing policy

Supported Bills

H.B. 103– Underage Marriage Amendments (Strong Support)

UTRSOL supported H.B. 103 as an interim step toward our preferred position of a complete ban on child marriage. We endorsed the bill’s new felony penalties without qualification — an explicit alignment with criminal accountability language — and used the testimony to signal UTRSOL’s willingness to engage in child-protection policy where the evidentiary basis is strong, particularly where such policies determine whether an individual becomes subject to the sex offense registry.

The evidentiary record we presented was specific and sourced. Citing Unchained at Last, a survivor-led organization dedicated to ending forced and child marriage, nearly 315,000 children were legally married across the United States between 2000 and 2021 with Utah, ranking seventh in the nation in per capita rates at 3.2 per 1,000 children. Nationally, 86% of married minors are girls, most wed to adult men with an average age gap of four years — a gap that, outside the institution of marriage, would have constituted a sex crime under many states’ laws.

That last connection was deliberate. We converted the marriage framing into an exploitation framing and drew an explicit line to sex crime thresholds, anchoring our testimony in UTRSOL’s core mission rather than treating child marriage as a separate policy lane. We did not ask the committee to accept that child marriage is harmful in the abstract. We showed, with sourced figures, that the harm is quantifiable, that Utah is a meaningful contributor to it, and that H.B. 103 addresses only part of the problem. This approach reframed the issue as one of measurable risk and statutory consistency rather than cultural or moral debate which would otherwise alienate Utah’s stakeholders and hinder evidence-based discussion.

H.B. 89 – Polygraph Prohibition for Sexual Assault Victims (Support)

UTRSOL supported H.B. 89 without reservation, and the testimony we presented reflects a deliberate reframing of what kind of bill this is. Where other advocates described H.B. 89 primarily as a victim-services measure, we made a public safety argument: when flawed investigative tools produce false negatives, guilty people escape accountability and remain free to reoffend. That framing was a direct response to the committee’s stated concern that prohibiting the polygraph ask might hamper prosecutions. We argued that removing an unreliable screening tool strengthens investigations by keeping credible cases focused on evidence rather than premature dismissal.

The evidentiary record we presented was specific and sourced. Citing the Utah Women and Leadership Project's 2022 update on sexual assault among Utah women, just 11.8% of individuals who experienced rape or sexual assault in the state reported the crime to law enforcement — meaning nearly 88% of offenses go unreported. We identified the polygraph requirement as one of several documented barriers contributing to that gap, alongside fear of retaliation, institutional distrust, stigma, and self-blame.

The physiological argument was central. The same autonomic responses that polygraphs interpret as indicators of deception — elevated heart rate, irregular breathing, heightened perspiration — are identical to the trauma responses experienced by sexual assault survivors. Science cannot distinguish between the two on a polygraph readout, which means truthful victims fail these examinations at high rates, their cases get dropped, and the accountability gap widens. We did not ask the committee to take that claim on faith. We grounded it in the scientific consensus that polygraphs are inadmissible precisely because that distinction cannot be reliably made.

The connecting thread to UTRSOL's broader mission is evidentiary integrity. A criminal legal system that routes consequential decisions through unreliable instruments doesn't just fail victims — it produces outcomes, including both wrongful non-prosecution and the coercive pressure on survivors to submit to a test they are likely to fail, that undermine the legitimacy of the entire process. H.B. 89 removes one such instrument. We framed that as a floor, not a ceiling.

S.J.R. 1 – Prior Sexual Conduct Evidence / Rule 404D (Support)

UTRSOL supported S.J.R. 1 because its procedural safeguards met our evidentiary integrity standard, contending that a framework excluding reliable pattern evidence would be less effective in protecting the public from habitual offenders. The resolution created Rule 404D, permitting courts to consider evidence of prior sexual assault conduct in subsequent prosecutions — a propensity evidence rule of the kind that defense attorneys, including those who represent UTRSOL's constituency, have historically and reasonably opposed.

The testimony we presented emphasized the procedural architecture the bill puts in place: mandatory notice to defense counsel, judicial gatekeeping conducted outside the presence of the jury, and the continued application of Rule 403's balancing standard. We framed S.J.R.1 not as an expansion of prosecutorial power but as an alignment — with federal evidentiary standards that have operated for over 30 years and with Utah's own juvenile court rules already in effect. The argument was consistency, not novelty.

The organizing principle we applied was the same one running through our other 2026 session positions: evidentiary integrity and targeted accountability under robust procedural safeguards. Where those safeguards are present and the evidentiary basis is sound, UTRSOL is willing to support tools that strengthen prosecution of sex offenses, even when those tools could be used against individuals in our constituency. The limiting case is unguarded propensity evidence — admitting prior allegations without judicial screening, notice requirements, or relevance standards. S.J.R.1, as structured, does not do that.

We noted in testimony that recidivism reflects identifiable patterns of behavior, and that Rule 404D permits courts to consider that reality under specified conditions. That framing acknowledged the bill's underlying empirical premise without endorsing a blanket inference of guilt from prior conduct. The tension between those two positions is real, and we did not pretend otherwise. What we concluded is that the procedural structure of S.J.R.1 is sufficient to hold that tension — and that a system which excludes reliable pattern evidence in cases where it has already cleared judicial scrutiny is not more just, only more limited.

H.B. 346 – Child Sexual Abuse, Positions of Special Trust (Support)

UTRSOL supported H.B. 346 on its own terms — not as a stepping stone to a broader position, but as a bill that aligns directly with the evidentiary foundation underlying our work. The bill clarifies which relationships qualify for "position of special trust" enhancements in child sexual abuse prosecutions. We endorsed it without reservation. Our testimony was designed to show why the research supports this kind of targeted accountability rather than simply advocating for harsher penalties across the board. In doing so, we emphasized that precision in statutory design can strengthen child protection without relying on broad punitive expansion.

The evidentiary record we presented was specific and sourced. Citing a May 2024 CDC report on child sexual abuse, 90% of these crimes are committed by individuals known to the child — family members, extended family, neighbors, coaches, church leaders, teachers, and older peers — not by strangers. We paired that figure with our own working knowledge of Utah's registry: roughly 30% of registrants have been convicted of child sexual abuse offenses, making this among the most consequential offense categories the registry encompasses.

That pairing was deliberate. The stranger-danger framing that dominates much of sex offense policy discourse is, the research shows, largely misleading when applied to child sexual abuse — and laws built around that

framing tend to overreach in some directions while underserving victims in others. H.B. 346 moves in the opposite direction: it concentrates accountability where victimization data says the risk is greatest. We used the testimony to make that case explicitly, framing the bill not merely as a prosecutorial clarification but as an evidence-informed alignment between statutory language and what survivors and researchers consistently report. "Laws protect without overreaching" was not incidental phrasing — it was a signal about the standard UTRSOL applies when deciding where to lend its support.

H.B. 289 – AI-Generated CSAM Amendments (Conditional Support)

UTRSOL supported H.B. 289's core purpose without reservation — updating Utah's CSAM statutes to address AI-generated material is a necessary response to technological developments that have created real new vulnerabilities for children. But the testimony we presented was structured to carry two arguments simultaneously. Specifically, we emphasized both the urgent need to modernize the law and the importance of ensuring that any new provisions remain narrowly tailored and evidence-based to avoid overreach.

The data we presented was longitudinal and precise. Prior to 2017, Utah's list of registrable offenses had not changed since 2011, when it stood at 30 enumerated offenses. Since then, the registry has expanded steadily: 42 registrable offenses before the 2026 session, 46 by its close. H.B. 289 adds three of those; H.B. 221 Coercion Amendments, which we also supported, accounts for one more through a statute split. Over less than a decade, 16 new offenses will have been added to what is now the sex, kidnap, and child abuse offender registry. We put those numbers on the record because they do not appear anywhere else in the legislative process.

The ask embedded in that data went beyond H.B. 289. We urged the Senate committee to support a review of registry criteria alongside the bill's passage — not an amendment, not opposition, but a request for a structural intervention that no single bill can deliver. The framing was deliberate: we disclaimed any intent to minimize the harms H.B. 289 addresses, because that disclaimer is structurally important. Raising registry concerns in the context of a CSAM bill invites the inference that we are minimizing child exploitation, we categorically do not. We foreclosed that inference directly and made the argument to bring context into focus on a large scale of cumulative registry growth on the record. By doing so, we ensured that the conversation remained anchored in evidence and proportionality rather than being overshadowed by assumptions about our motives.

H.B. 205 – Substance Use Intervention Amendments (Conditional Support)

UTRSOL supported H.B. 205 while using the testimony to challenge a specific provision that directly affects our constituency. The bill's STEP program — a Swift, Certain, and Fair specialty court model at the justice court level — categorically excludes individuals with pending sex offense charges. We endorsed the bill's core purpose without reservation and then made a precise argument against that exclusion on the bill's own terms: a program designed to reduce high-utilizer recidivism through treatment rather than incarceration defeats that purpose by barring a population with documented treatment need from accessing it.

The evidentiary record we presented was specific and sourced. Conservative estimates from sex offense treatment program providers within Utah suggest that between 1,500 and 2,500 people with sex offense histories have co-occurring substance use disorders — exactly the population the STEP program was designed to reach. We put that figure on the record because it does not appear elsewhere in the legislative process, and because the exclusion's consequences are invisible without it. Including this data made the potential impact of policy gaps tangible for the committee, grounding our testimony in measurable need rather than abstract concern.

The ask was procedural, not categorical. We did not argue that sex offense charges should be treated identically to other offenses. We argued for tiered eligibility and case-by-case judicial review — the ability for a court to evaluate each case individually using validated risk assessments and require integrated treatment where appropriate. That framing was deliberate. A blanket exclusion regardless of offense severity, the role substance use played, or the risk profile of the individual does not reflect how treatment need actually distributes across this population. It reflects a categorical assumption, and we asked the committee to replace that assumption with a process. The amendment was not adopted, but the argument — and the data behind it — is now part of the legislative record.

By anchoring our testimony in concrete numbers and treatment realities, we shifted the conversation from hypothetical risks to evidence-driven policy design. Even though the amendment was not adopted, documenting this argument creates a reference point for future discussions, demonstrating that policy can be challenged and refined without rejecting the bill's overall goals. Moreover, it establishes a precedent for using data to reveal hidden consequences of procedural exclusions. Over time, this approach helps build a legislative culture where nuanced, evidence-based solutions for populations with specialized needs become standard practice.

Opposed Bills

H.B. 110 – Board of Pardons and Parole Amendments (Opposed, House and Senate Committees)

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 110, specifically Provision 3, across two committee hearings. We acknowledged the bill's victim rights focus under Provision 1 and did not contest the parole review provisions. We instead directed our argument narrowly at the requirement tying Board of Pardons waiting periods to registry removal timelines, and we made that argument on two independent grounds: constitutional authority and evidentiary basis.

The constitutional argument was stated at the outset of the Senate committee testimony and not softened. The Board of Pardons holds discretionary clemency authority under Article 7 of the Utah Constitution, a power recognized through H.B. 13 and S.B. 215 in 2012 and 2021. Provision 3 does not eliminate that authority on its face, but it constrains the Board's ability to consider each case on its individual merits by imposing external timelines that the pardon process was never designed to carry. We also drew a distinction the sponsor's framing had collapsed: pardons are not exonerations. They are acts of forgiveness, not findings of innocence, and treating them as an expedited registry removal pathway misreads what the Board's clemency function actually is.

The evidentiary argument was equally direct. We cited a 2019 Utah Department of Corrections presentation to the Judiciary Interim Committee showing the Board approved 14 out of 83 petitions between 2015 and 2019 — a conservative approval rate that contradicts the premise that pardons are functioning as a soft exit from the registry. We had requested current data from the Board of Pardons and Parole, CCJJ, and the sponsor before both committee meetings. None was produced. The sponsor's claim that pardon-based registry removals had increased every year since 2021 was presented as fact without documentation. We asked, on the record, where the data was and did not receive an answer.

Although the argument and the data gap underpinning the bill are now part of the legislative record, they challenged the legislative process by highlighting the absence of a transparent evidentiary foundation and exposing key claims presented as fact without documentation or verification, thereby laying the groundwork for potential future litigation. This record ensures that any future review or challenge will be informed by a clear, documented account of the evidentiary shortcomings in the bill's presentation.

H.B. 123 – Out-of-State Sex Offender Registration (Opposed, House and Senate Committees)

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 123 across two committee hearings, escalating our opposition rather than softening between them. The argument was not that out-of-state offenders should be exempt from Utah's registry requirements. It was that the bill's entire justification rested on claims the sponsor had never documented, and that every institutional body that endorsed the bill had done so without demanding verification — producing, in the Senate committee meeting's testimony precise framing, a cascade of institutional legitimacy built on an unsubstantiated foundation.

The evidentiary record we presented was the only quantitative evidence introduced at any stage of the bill's legislative history. Out-of-state registrants constituted 6.4% of Utah's registry in 2005 and 13% in 2025 — two data points we identified, with no annual trend data between them and no comparison to national averages. The sponsor's “sanctuary state” ranking, the number of judges she claimed had misinterpreted the statute, and the volume of interstate complaints from other states were never sourced or verified at any committee hearing across five meetings.

In the House hearing, the sponsor acknowledged on the record that the ranking came from her own research and that she could not verify its accuracy. By the Senate hearing, we were citing that concession directly: the foundation the bill rested on had been admitted as unverified by the person who introduced it. This allowed us to clearly demonstrate to the Senate committee that the bill's central premise lacked independent corroboration, undermining its evidentiary credibility.

That framing was deliberate. UTRSOL was not the opposition in this proceeding — we were the only party that had introduced documented figures into the record at all. The systemic threshold question followed from that: one to two judges interpreting a statute differently does not constitute a systemic problem requiring statewide statutory overhaul, and the claim that it does requires evidence proportionate to the intervention. Both committees passed the bill unanimously.

The institutional endorsement pattern we named — CCJJ, SWAP, the Interstate Compact Commission, the Victim Services Commission, all lending credibility without demanding documentation — illustrates precisely why the evidentiary challenge had to be made explicitly and repeatedly. When enough credentialed bodies endorse a bill, the absence of underlying data disappears from view unless it is put on the record.

**H.B. 370 – GPS Monitoring for Unhoused Registrants
(Opposed, House and Senate Committees)**

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 370 across two committee hearings. Our opposition was built from the bill's own numbers rather than from external arguments. The testimony functioned as a precision cross-examination: we accepted the bill's stated population, disaggregated it using publicly available registry data, and returned a figure that reframed what the bill was actually targeting. The estimated quarter-to-a-third of registrants intentionally avoiding registration and the “absconded” category that the registry tracks separately represented a smaller population that was being suggested. Applied to the bill's prospective-only enforcement structure, the population for whom the bill's core mechanism actually applied was somewhere between 72 and 87 people. We put those numbers on the record because no one else had.

The evidentiary fiscal record we presented was specific and sourced. GPS monitoring costs — \$150 installation, \$6 per day through AP&P, \$15 per day through private providers, totaling \$2,300 and \$5,600 annually per person respectively — were introduced into the committee record by UTRSOL, not by the bill's sponsors. The California 2012 study cited in support of the bill was conducted on high-risk registrants under active supervision; the population this bill targets is registrants without addresses, a materially different group for whom that evidence was never developed. The Cicero Institute, which co-presented the bill in both committees, is a Texas-based organization with no formal role in Utah's criminal justice policy. We named that on the record.

The root cause argument ran alongside the evidentiary challenge and was equally deliberate. Utah's good landlord program bars registrants from a significant share of available housing. Homeless shelters frequently refuse registry access. The bill imposes GPS monitoring on registrants who cannot secure housing while leaving intact the conditions producing that outcome — and does so by treating two distinct registry classifications, location unknown and absconded, as the same problem. They are not. One reflects a housing failure; the other reflects a compliance failure. The registry already distinguishes between them. A bill that collapses that distinction is not a public safety response to homelessness among registrants — it is a surveillance mechanism applied to a population the system has already helped make homeless. We did not ask the committee to accept that framing in the abstract. We showed, with sourced figures and specific cost data, that the bill addresses a symptom while the conditions producing it remain in place. Both committees passed the bill unanimously.

H.C.R. 2 – Sentencing Guidelines, Zero-Day Floor Removal (Opposed)

UTRSOL opposed H.C.R. 2, specifically the elimination of the zero-day floor on the jail-as-condition-of-probation matrix for serious felonies and sex offenses. The opposition was targeted — not at the sentencing guidelines as a whole, but at one structural change within them, and the argument turned on what a zero-day sentence actually means within Utah's sentencing architecture rather than on what it appears to mean from the outside.

The testimony we presented was legally specific. A sentence of zero days for a serious felony in Utah does not signal that the offense is treated lightly. It reflects a suspended prison term in favor of jail following placement on supervised probation for 48 to 60 months, under enforceable conditions, using individualized judicial findings of low assessed risk, minimal prior record, and a credible plan for treatment and monitoring. By detailing these mechanisms, we clarified that the sentence structure is consistent with public safety goals while allowing for proportionate, evidence-based intervention.

The full sentence can still be imposed if the terms of probation or supervision are violated, meaning that any breach of the court's conditions — such as failure to comply with treatment requirements, reoffending, or other mandated obligations — can trigger activation of the originally imposed prison term. This ensures that accountability is maintained while allowing for structured, conditional alternatives to immediate incarceration. Removing the zero-day floor does not make serious felony sentencing more rigorous — it removes a tool that courts use sparingly and only after individualized findings, and replaces it with a presumption that some jail time is always appropriate regardless of what a risk assessment shows.

That last point was the one we left the committee with, in the form of a question: in what case or cases has an individual convicted of a serious felony ever been sentenced to zero days? The question was not rhetorical. It applied the same evidentiary standard we brought to H.B. 110 and H.B. 123 — if a legislative change is justified by a problem, the problem should be documentable.

The updated guidelines specifically carve out serious felonies and sex offenses for the more restrictive pre-JRI recommendations, which means the change lands directly on the population UTRSOL represents. We did not ask the committee to accept that the zero-day floor serves an important function in the abstract. We asked them to identify the documented pattern of misuse that justified eliminating it. The bill passed unanimously. The question was not answered.

H.B. 134 – Interstate Compact Transfer Fee Increase (Opposed)

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 134 on the basis of two specific gaps, not the bill's purpose. We acknowledged the legitimate procedural improvements the bill contains and did not contest them. What we contested was the decision to advance those improvements without an indigent fee waiver for the transfer fee increase and without data accuracy and removal protections for the new NCIC warrant reporting mandate. We proposed three specific amendments before the bill moved forward: an indigent fee waiver provision, disaggregated administrative and extradition cost reporting, and NCIC data accuracy and timely removal protections. All three exist in other states and in other Utah statutes already.

The fee argument was grounded in research, not in the dollar amount. Interstate transfer enables employment, treatment access, and family stability, all of which the research on financial barriers in the criminal justice system consistently identifies as recidivism-reducing factors. A bill that raises a fee with no relief provision for those who cannot pay is not administratively neutral. It forecloses an option for the population that most needs it, which undermines the bill's own stated goals of effective supervision and successful reintegration.

UTRSOL addressed the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) warrant submission directly. The submission itself follows a person into employment background checks, traffic stops, and housing applications. A reporting mandate with no provision for timely removal of satisfied warrants and no data accuracy verification is not a minor administrative detail — it is a due process exposure with real downstream consequences that the bill as written contains no mechanism to correct. Legitimate administrative goals should not advance without the protections that make them operate fairly. The bill passed unanimously without those protections added.

H.B. 114 – Lewdness/Pornography Statute Clarification (Opposed)

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 114 and rejected the characterization that it is a clarification of law. The bill reorganizes existing lewdness involving children statutes into separate code sections, and the sponsor and CCJJ presented that reorganization as purely administrative. We argued the opposite: that separating and restructuring these statutes creates new arrest tools aimed at protected expression, wrapped in child-protection language that is politically difficult to challenge, without the narrowing requirements that would confine enforcement to conduct actually causing harm. This restructuring, in our view, risks expanding prosecutorial discretion in ways that could inadvertently criminalize constitutionally protected behavior.

We argued that the First Amendment was grounded in CCJJ's own analysis. In presenting the bill, CCJJ acknowledged that Utah law already goes about as far as one could go without infringing on the First Amendment — that the existing definitions of obscenity are court-vetted and the prohibitions are at their constitutional limit. Our position was that a bill reorganizing statutes at that limit does not stay at that limit. It extends past it by criminalizing broad expressive conduct without requiring intent or actual harm, and by relying on definitions vague enough to invite arbitrary enforcement rather than targeted application.

That last point was the one we made explicit. Gay pride parades were held in Salt Lake City for over two decades without legislative response. When similar events were held in southern Utah and constituents from that part of the state objected, broader lewdness restrictions involving children were proposed and passed in vivid statutory detail. That sequence is not incidental to the bill's history — it is the bill's history. We did not ask the committee to accept in the abstract that child-protection framing can be used to target protected expression. We showed, with a specific and documented legislative pattern, that it already had been, and that H.B. 114 extends the same mechanism further. While the bill passed the House and Senate committees and the House chamber, it did not receive a vote in the Senate chamber, stalling the bill before the end of the session.

H.B. 116 – Criminal Fines Amendments (Opposed)

UTRSOL opposed H.B. 116, and the testimony we provided was explicit that opposition was not to accountability for sex offenses. It was to the specific dollar amounts — \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$20,000 — for which no evidentiary basis had been provided at any stage of the bill's legislative history. We asked each committee member on the record: what evidence supports these specific amounts as effective deterrence for these offenses? Not a general belief that fines deter. The specific figures in this bill.

The answer was supplied by the bill's own supporters. The Utah Sentencing Commission voted 9-3 in favor while its members stated on the record that the approach is not very evidence-based and that the amounts were selected because they sound reasonable. The Victim Services Commission supported the bill while acknowledging that mandatory fines at these levels would likely cause prosecutors to plea bargain sex offense charges down to non-sex offenses — a direct admission that the bill's own institutional backers predicted it would reduce sex offense convictions. We did not supply those critiques. We assembled them from the record the bill had already generated and put them back in front of the committee.

The exchange with the Senator committee closed off the most available dismissal. When asked whether UTRSOL would support the bill if evidence demonstrated that \$10,000 was more deterrent than \$5,000, the answer was yes, on the record. Our position is not that mandatory fines are wrong in principle. It is that no one in this proceeding, across two sessions of this bill, had demonstrated that these amounts are right.

The bill was also framed as a technical correction — a characterization we rejected directly. It reenacted the mandatory minimum fine policy that received minutes of House debate and zero substantive questions. Calling that technical does not make it so, and the victims these fines are supposed to serve deserve a policy grounded in evidence rather than in dollar amounts that sound reasonable to the people proposing them. While the bill passed the House and Senate committees and the House chamber, it did not receive a vote in the Senate chamber, stalling the bill before the end of the session.

Legislative Summary

UTRSOL testified on 13 bills across the 2026 Utah General Session, appearing before the House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, and the Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee. The record spans supported bills, opposed bills, and bills where support was conditioned on specific amendments UTRSOL requested but did not receive. Across all appearances, the organizing principle was consistent: evidentiary integrity, targeted accountability, and proportionate intervention. UTRSOL did not oppose accountability for sex offenses as a category, and it did not support reform measures as a category. It evaluated each bill on the quality of its evidentiary foundation and the precision of its mechanism.

Taken together, the 2026 session record establishes several consistent features of UTRSOL's legislative posture. Our organization engaged across a wider range of bills than our stated mission might predict — child marriage, CSAM, polygraph use, propensity evidence, sentencing guidelines, lewdness statutes — applying the same evidentiary standard to each. Support was extended to bills with sound evidentiary foundations and adequate procedural safeguards, including bills that strengthen prosecution of sex offenses. Opposition was directed at bills whose justifications were undocumented, whose mechanisms were disproportionate to demonstrated problems, or whose administrative framing concealed substantive policy choices with real consequences for real people.

Strategic Analysis

Public Comment and Testimony

Most advocacy organizations appear in committee rooms selectively — when a bill directly threatens their constituency, when a vote is close, when media attention makes presence strategically valuable. Testimony under those conditions signals responsiveness. It does not signal institutional commitment.

Sixteen testimonies on thirteen bills across a single 45-day session reflects a different orientation. We treat public comment not as an intervention tool deployed at moments of acute risk, but as a standing practice — one that continues regardless of whether a given bill is likely to pass, whether the committee is sympathetic, or whether our testimony is likely to shift a single vote. That consistency converts individual appearances into a cumulative argument: we are present because presence is the position, not because any particular hearing offered a favorable tactical opening.

The legislative record that results is more than a log of participation. It is a documented institutional perspective — a body of stated analysis that accumulates across sessions, that can be cited in subsequent hearings, that establishes what we argued before outcomes were known. Consistency signals that we will still be there next session, and the session after that — which is, in a legislative context, a form of credibility that no single testimony, however well-crafted, can establish on its own.

Evidence-Proportionality Framework

Across all thirteen bills, our arguments rest on a consistent two-dimensional framework. The first dimension is evidentiary: does this bill rest on documented, verifiable data, or on anecdote and assertion? The second is proportionality: even where a problem is documented, is the response scaled to its actual scope?

That framework only retains credibility if it operates in both directions, and the record demonstrates that it does. An evidentiary standard that consistently yields opposition is not a standard at all, but a rhetorical device. A standard that also produces support functions as a genuine constraint. We were not searching for reasons to support those bills which have a tertiary effect on the population that affects our advocacy; we applied the same evidentiary standard used in opposition, and the evidence

met it. Our testimony on those bills reflects that directly. Our positions follow the evidence, not the other way around, as the committee record demonstrates; it is the only basis on which our framework merits being taken seriously.

Applying the framework across the full legislative slate also allowed us to identify patterns that are invisible when bills are evaluated in isolation. When multiple measures expand criminal penalties or registry eligibility without a corresponding governing framework, the cumulative effect becomes a policy architecture built through incremental additions rather than deliberate design. By placing individual proposals within that broader structure, our testimony aimed not only to evaluate specific bills but to bring the larger trajectory of registry growth and criminal law expansion into the legislative record.

Policy Reform Agenda

Based on testimony presented across sixteen committee hearings during the 2026 legislative session, Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL) advances the following reform agenda in approximate order of priority. These priorities reflect the organization's evidence-proportionality framework: policies should be grounded in verifiable data, calibrated to documented risk, and structured to maximize measurable public safety outcomes.

Registry Structure Reform

UTRSOL supports replacing Utah's current two-tier registry structure (10-year and lifetime) with a three-tier system aligned with federal SORNA standards, structured around offense severity and calibrated to better distinguish between levels of risk.

Risk-Based Registry Model

UTRSOL advocates transitioning from a conviction-based registry model to a risk-based framework, in which registration requirements, duration, and public disclosure are determined by empirically assessed risk rather than solely by the presence of a qualifying conviction.

Tiered Public Access to Registry Information

Public access to registry data should be restricted for lower-risk tiers, while maintaining full law enforcement access across all tiers. This approach preserves investigative utility while limiting unnecessary public exposure for individuals assessed to present minimal risk.

Evidence-Based Review of Registrable Offenses

UTRSOL calls for a systematic review of Utah’s 46 (and expanding) registrable offenses against an evidence-based public safety threshold, with a formal statutory process for removing offenses that do not demonstrably advance community safety.

Housing Stability Reform

UTRSOL supports addressing housing barriers created by state-supported programs, including exclusions within the Utah Good Landlord Program and homeless shelter admission policies that categorically deny entry to registrants. Housing stability is strongly associated with lower recidivism and improved supervision compliance.

Treatment Court Access

UTRSOL supports judicial discretion in substance use treatment court eligibility for individuals with sex offense histories who also have co-occurring substance use disorders, replacing categorical statutory exclusions with individualized judicial assessment.

Evidence-Based Reentry Supports

UTRSOL supports the development of state-supported housing stabilization, employment assistance, and treatment programs tied to empirically validated recidivism-reduction strategies, recognizing that reintegration conditions materially influence long-term public safety outcomes.

Together, these reforms reflect a shift toward evidence-calibrated registry policy, where criminal justice interventions are structured around demonstrable risk, measurable outcomes, and proportional responses rather than categorical classifications alone. By grounding policy in empirical data and risk assessment, the reforms aim to focus resources and oversight on individuals and behaviors that present meaningful public safety concerns, rather than imposing blanket measures that fail to differentiate between low- and high-risk populations.

Moreover, by embedding systematic review processes, tiered public access, and individualized judicial discretion into the registry framework, these reforms create a sustainable, adaptable system capable of evolving with new research, changing demographics, and emerging patterns of risk. In this way, Utah’s registry policy would move from a static, conviction-based model toward a dynamic, risk-informed system that balances accountability, proportionality, and reintegration, setting a precedent for evidence-driven criminal justice reform more broadly.

Political Positioning

Criminal justice reform in most legislative environments carries a political framing before a single argument is made. The assumption that advocacy on behalf of individuals on the sex offense registry is a progressive cause — and therefore a Democratic one — follows automatically for many observers, and it is wrong in ways that matter.

The research base we cite does not belong to one party. Peer-reviewed recidivism data, constitutional proportionality doctrine, and fiscal analysis of registry administration costs are not ideological instruments. They are empirical inputs. When we testified against registry expansion provisions during the 2026 legislative session, we were not advocating for a political outcome — we were arguing that the evidentiary justification for those provisions was insufficient relative to the restrictions they imposed. That is a methodological objection, not a partisan one.

The broader pattern of our positions reflects this. We have argued for procedural fairness in the legislative process — for adequate public comment windows, for transparency when floor substitutes add substantive provisions to bills after committee hearings close. Those are process arguments. They apply regardless of what the bill contains or which party introduced it. We have raised constitutional questions about restrictions that may lack proportionate justification. Constitutional limits on legislative authority are not a liberal or conservative concern; they are a structural one.

Maintaining that register in the Utah Legislature is not a neutral act in a frictionless environment. It requires active resistance to the sorting pressure the institution applies. Bills in this policy area arrive pre-labeled. Committees that hear them are already oriented. Legislators who engage with the substance often do so across a background assumption about where an organization like ours sits politically. We have worked to complicate that assumption — not by softening our positions, but by grounding them in terms that do not require a partisan framework to evaluate.

A legislature that enacts restrictions without engaging that evidence is not making a conservative or liberal choice — it is making an uninformed one, and the public bears the downstream cost. When we occupy the evidentiary center, we are not splitting the difference between two political positions; we are insisting that public safety outcomes, not political signals, be the operative measure of whether a policy is working. That insistence does not belong to a party, and we intend to keep it that way.

The 2026 Session in Full

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws completed the 2026 Utah legislative session having testified at 16 committee hearings on 13 bills, applying a consistent evidence-proportionality framework to every bill encountered. The final record – six bills supported, seven opposed, and two with conditional support presents a coherent and internally consistent philosophy to stakeholders, genuine operational capacity, and a structural position that establishes a foundation for our near-term legislative goals.

The exchanges during testimony confirmed that “rational” in our organization’s name is not rhetorical, that the evidence standard applies symmetrically to constrain both opposition and support, and that the organization is not defending a fixed set of outcomes but demanding a fixed standard of justification. This approach ensures that our positions are consistently grounded in data and proportionality, rather than ideology or political expedience.

What the 2026 session established is that the standard exists, is consistently applied, and is publicly documented in sixteen hearing transcripts. For researchers, legislators, and advocates tracking Utah's criminal justice policy, that record is the organization's most significant output of the session.

Looking forward, UTRSOL's most productive near-term legislative opportunity is the housing assistance network. The locally-grounded data we have generated – on shelter exclusions, good landlord program barriers, and the population of registrants without stable addresses – is the kind of concrete, jurisdiction-specific evidence that legislative staff and legislators can point to when advocating for the root cause investments UTRSOL has consistently called for from the committee table. That data will be more useful next session than it was this one.

The legal action committee identified during testimony represents a different kind of opportunity, and a longer timeline. The 2026 session produced a documented record of bills advanced on unverified premises, institutional endorsements without independent evidentiary review, and statutory mechanisms that may not survive proportionality scrutiny. That record does not expire when the session ends. Litigation moves slowly, but it operates on a standard of proof that legislative committees are not required to meet – and UTRSOL has spent a session building exactly the kind of documented factual record that makes that standard navigable.

Appendix: Transcript Index

Transcript File	Bill / Subject	Date	UTRSOL Position
2-2_HSTJUD_H.B.110	H.B. 110 – Board of Pardons (House Judiciary)	Feb 2	Oppose (Prov. 2&3)
2-5_HSTJUD_H.B.123	H.B. 123 – Out-of-State Registration (House)	Feb 5	Oppose
2-13_HSTJUD_H.B.370	H.B. 370 – GPS Monitoring (House Judiciary)	Feb 13	Oppose
2-17_SSTJLC_H.B.110	H.B. 110 – Board of Pardons (Senate Judiciary)	Feb 17	Oppose (Prov. 3)
2-24_SSTJLC_H.B.103	H.B. 103– Underage Marriage Amendments	Feb 24	Strong Support
2-25_HSTJUD_S.J.R.1	S.J.R. 1 – Prior Sexual Conduct Evidence / Rule 404D	Feb 25	Support
2-26_SSTJLC_H.B.89	H.B. 89 – Polygraph Prohibition, Sexual Assault Victims	Feb 26	Support
2-26_SSTJLC_H.B.205	H.B. 205 – Substance Use / STEP Courts	Feb 26	Support w/ amendment
2-27_SSTJLC_H.C.R.2	H.C.R. 2 – Sentencing Guidelines (Zero-Day Floor)	Feb 27	Oppose
2-27_SSTJLC_H.B.346	H.B. 346 – Child Sexual Abuse, Special Trust Positions	Feb 27	Support
2-27_SSTJLC_H.B.289	H.B. 289 – AI-Generated CSAM Amendments	Feb 27	Support w/ concern
2-27_SSTJLC_H.B.134	H.B. 134 – Interstate Compact Transfer Fee	Feb 27	Oppose
2-27_SSTJLC_H.B.123	H.B. 123 – Out-of-State Registration (Senate)	Feb 27	Oppose
2-27_SSTJLC_H.B.114	H.B. 114 – Lewdness/Pornography Statute Clarification	Feb 27	Oppose
3-3_SSTJLC_H.B.370	H.B. 370 – GPS Monitoring (Senate Judiciary)	Mar 3	Oppose
3-3_SSTJLC_H.B.116	H.B. 116 – Criminal Fines Amendments	Mar 3	Oppose

Session summary: 16 total testimonies | 13 unique bills | 6 supported (2 conditional) | 7 opposed | Session ended March 6, 2026.

