



Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

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Governor Spencer Cox
350 N. State Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 142220
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

Dear Governor Cox,

My name is Felix Espinoza, and I am the founder of Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL), a small Utah-based advocacy organization focused on reforming the state's sex offense registry laws and related criminal justice policies, as well as providing direct housing and employment assistance to registrants.

We are writing today to respectfully request that you veto, or if they must stand, allow the following bills to become law without your signature: H.B. 110, which prohibits the Board of Pardons and Parole from exercising its constitutional authority to grant pardons for individuals subject to 10- and 20-year registration requirements; H.B. 123, which clarifies and expands when an individual must register in Utah after moving from another state; and H.B. 370, which effectively imposes GPS monitoring requirements on homeless registrants who are unable to secure housing due to the strict limitations created by state law and housing regulations.

A 2013 U.S. Department of Justice evaluation of 516 high-risk sex offenders on parole found that GPS monitoring significantly reduced arrests and sex-related violations, but only when applied to high-risk individuals under supervision, not the entire unhoused registry population that H.B. 370 would apply to.

These bills are part of a broader set of sex offense legislation that has continued to move regulation of this population in a significantly more punitive direction during this legislative session—expanding registrable offenses, tightening supervision requirements, and increasing enforcement mechanisms—despite our organization's opposition to many of these measures throughout the legislative process.

Under Utah Code §63M-7-204(z), the responsibilities of CCJJ include reviewing, researching, advising, and making recommendations to the three branches of government regarding evidence-based sex offense management policies and practices, including supervision standards, treatment standards, and the sex offender registry. CCJJ's support for these bills was inconsistent with its statutory responsibility to promote evidence-based policy.

Throughout every stage of the process—including meetings of the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) divisions: the CCJJ Commission, Sentencing Commission, and Victim Services Commission, as well as House and Senate committee hearings—these bills were permitted to advance through the legislative process despite a lack of evidentiary support justifying the claims underlying the legislation. Every request made on the record by our organization for supporting evidence or clarification went unaddressed in the legislative record.

UTRSOL's legislative record is grounded in research and evidence-based analysis regarding these bills. We understand the political realities legislatures face when considering sex offense legislation. We are not asking for a cessation of legislative action; rather, we ask that policies regulating this population be grounded in credible research and evidence-based practices.

At most, we respectfully request that you veto these bills due to the lack of evidentiary support demonstrating that they will improve public safety. At the very least, we respectfully request that you allow these bills to become law without your signature as a political signal that legislation and laws like this cannot continue to make their way through the process without evidence backing their claims and justifying their restrictions.

In your end-of-session letter to lawmakers in 2025, you stated, “There is also a valid question as to whether these enhancements [rapid growth in new offenses], absent an overarching strategy, will actually achieve the public safety goals they’re intended to address.” We echo that concern again this year, as the legislature has once more advanced these measures without the overarching strategy you described.

UTRSOL continues to expand its housing and employment resources for registrants while increasing our visibility among legislators and key stakeholders. We are also working to broaden our legal and clinical partnerships in order to provide grounded, research-based perspectives as an advocacy organization. Should you have any questions or wish to meet with our organization directly, we would welcome the opportunity. Thank you sincerely for your time, your consideration, and for the work you do on behalf of our community and the State of Utah.

Felix Espinoza

Interim Chairman, Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL)

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