



**DEPARTMENT OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

GENERAL SESSION SUMMARY

20

26

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WORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Greetings justice partners,

The 2026 General Session was a record breaking year with 1,016 publicly numbered bills. The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and its related commissions enjoyed reviewing all potential legislation that relate to the justice system.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the legislature, the governor, and our justice partners for their hard work these past 45 days.

We are excited to assist in the implementation of passed legislation, particularly as our agency will be undergoing a restructure from the passage of Senate Bill 323.

Lastly, please feel free to reach out to our team if there is a particular topic area of interest you need assistance with during the interim.

With appreciation,



Tom Ross

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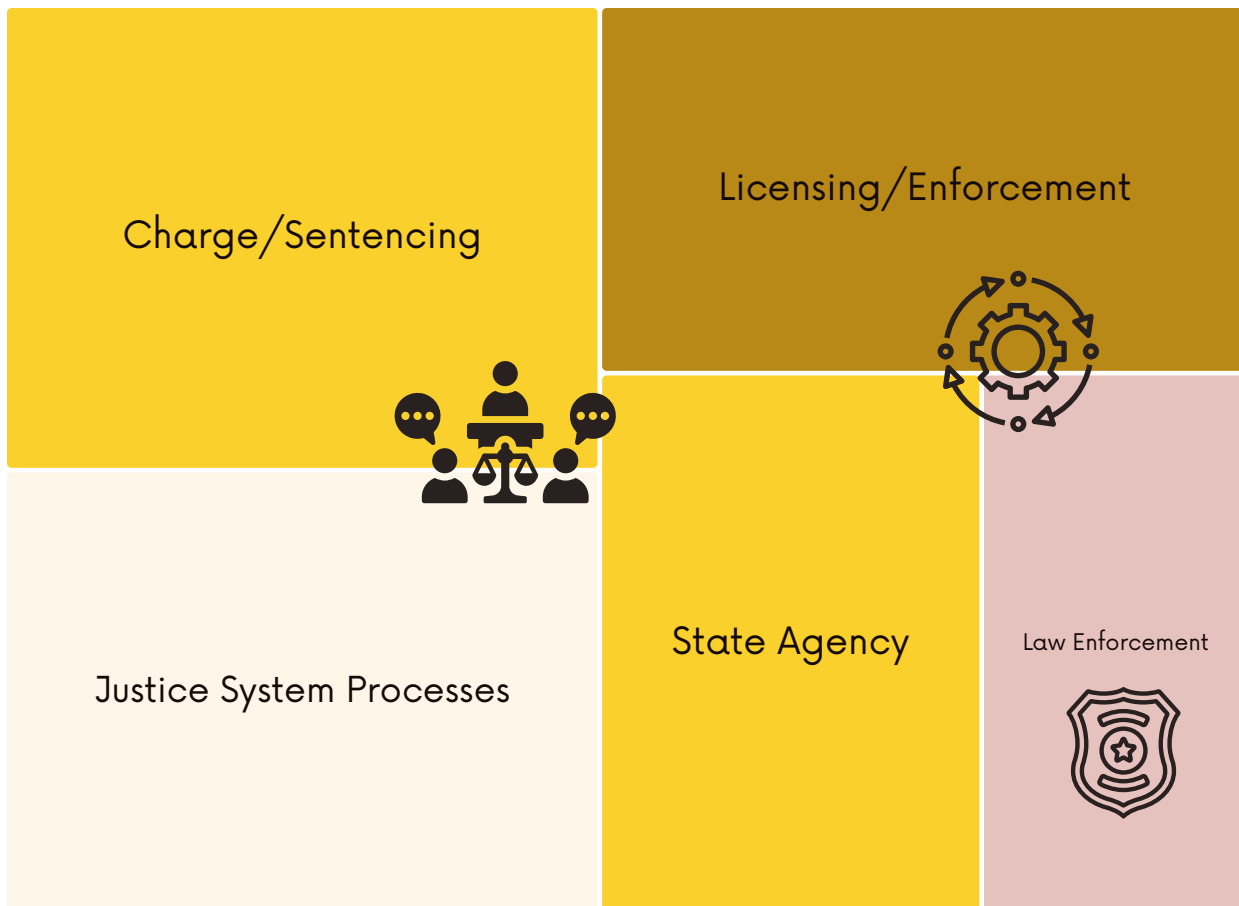
Introduction

Over
550
bills were tracked!

This summary report serves to provide a general overview of legislation that may have a direct or ancillary impact on the criminal and juvenile justice system. A complete list of all official legislative positions can be found [here](#). It is important to note we tracked many bills that impacted the office as a state agency and not necessarily the justice system.

Out of the 1,016 bills that were introduced in the 2026 General Legislative Session, the Department of Criminal Justice tracked 562 bills, which includes substituted bills, across all of the various commissions. There were 299 unique bills which represents 29% of all publicly numbered bills! Figure 1 shows the top five major themes identified.

Figure 1



OFFENSE ELEMENTS

Figure 2 categorizes bills that impacted criminal offenses into two groups. The dark purple bar shows there were 66 bills that aimed to create a new crime, expand an existing offense, or enhance penalties. The gold bar shows there were 7 bills that aimed to narrow an offense, reduce penalties, or repeal an existing crime. These include all bills that were introduced and may have been substituted through the legislative process.

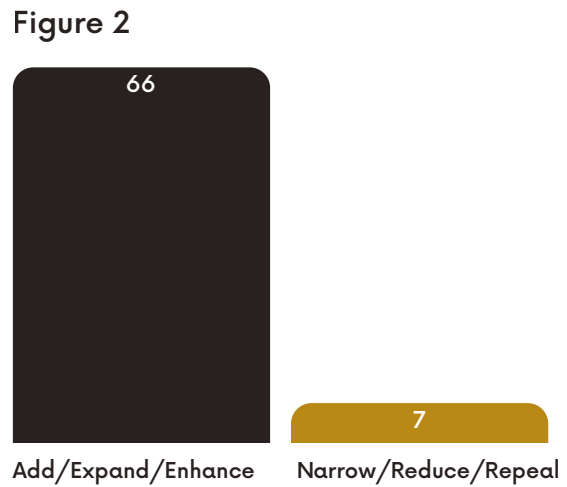


Table 1 provides a breakdown of the two groups and the outcome. Filed means the bill could have just run out of time, held in rules due to fiscal impact, or the sponsor chose not to move forward with bill. No means, the bill got held in a committee or failed to recommend. Yes means, the bill passed.

Table 1

	Filed	No	Yes
Add/Expand/Enhance Bills	24	5	37
Narrow/Reduce/Repeal Bills	2	0	5

Table 2 shows there were an additional 37 bills that aimed to clarify an existing offense but not necessarily create any changes in existing penalties. These are generally bills that dealt with topics areas such as licensing and enforcement, traffic, and, elections.

Table 2

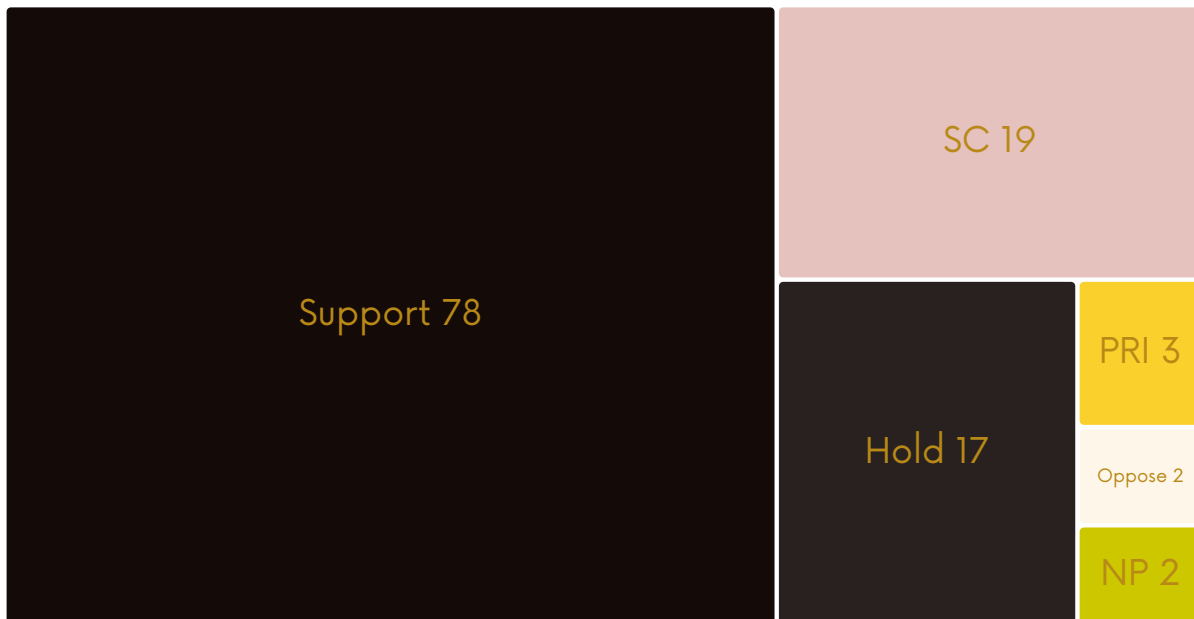
	Filed	No	Yes
Clarified Existing Offense Bills	15	1	21

Background

Utah's **Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ)** serves as the hub for justice issues for the State of Utah while acting as a coordinating body for policy development. The success of CCJJ is due to the makeup of our statutorily delegated and appointed members, representing all facets of the criminal and juvenile justice system including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, legislators, victim representatives, law enforcement, treatment specialists, corrections, parole authorities, education, and community partners. Click [here](#) for our latest annual report.

Voting Summary

Overall, CCJJ took a position on 121 bills which included substituted bills. The majority of those bills had a position of Support (78). There were 16 bills that were held, 19 bills had a Support in Concept, 2 bills with a No Position, and 2 bills which were opposed. Commission members worked with the sponsors to address stakeholders' concerns on many bills, including those that were supported.



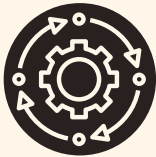
CCJJ BILL HIGHLIGHTS

The following bills are supported legislation that either the Commission worked on with the sponsor or are a result of an interim working group.



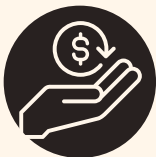
SB 323 Sub 1 — Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification (PASSED)

This is a CCJJ restructuring bill that will reorganize CCJJ into a new Department of Criminal Justice under a new Title 75E, largely by relocating existing statutes into a clearer, chronological structure without substantive policy changes. The goal of this re-organization is to modernize the structure, streamline operations, and better position the agency to fulfill its growing duties moving forward.



HB 48 Sub 4 — Criminal and Juvenile Justice Changes (PASSED)

This bill expands the statutory definition of recidivism and requires CCJJ to report additional recidivism measures when available and creates a definition for juvenile and school-based recidivism. Additionally, it allows a judge to decide whether an individual who committed aggravated murder at age 17 but is sentenced at 18 should be placed in juvenile secure care or the adult system.



HB 137 Sub 1 — Violence Crime Clearance Amendments (PASSED)

This bill creates a grant program to assist a law enforcement agency in solving violent crimes. Grant program will include monies appropriated from the Legislature as well as privately donated funds and will be administered by the Department of Criminal Justice.



SB 233 Sub 1 — Judicial Evaluation Performance Amendments (PASSED)

This bill creates a process in which the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission and its review of judges will have opportunities for the public to be informed and be engaged, while also protecting other aspects:

- Updates judicial performance surveys
- Provides additional certification standards for appellate judges
- Requires a study on appellate reversals

CCJJ BILL HIGHLIGHTS



HB 220 Sub 2 — Public Safety Amendments (PASSED)

This bill removes various reports to LECJ interim committee but adds to the Public Safety Portal data: BCI purchases by restricted, possessing, or transferring a firearm as a result of a DV offense conviction; JJYS data of sexual assaults in facilities; UDC data of sexual assaults; higher education to provide data of crime in student housing; multi-agency strike force annual report; BOPP report; SAKI report; PCC report. Clarifies CCJJ does not have to provide data as part of a GRAMA record request.

Lastly, it's important to note there were 10 bills that require CCJJ to collect or receive data from partner agencies which would include some new reporting requirement in the Public Safety Portal.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Background

Within CCJJ, we have the **Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee (JJOC)**, the **Utah Board of Juvenile Justice (UBJJ)**, and the **Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Collaborative** to advance policies and practices that promote a just and equitable juvenile justice system. Across all three groups we have members representing the Juvenile Court, Juvenile Justice and Youth Services, Utah State Board of Education, local mental health professionals, law enforcement, defense, prosecution, community organizations, and others.

JJOC is statutorily responsible for overseeing the implementation of the juvenile reform efforts and for gathering and analyzing data that measures the impact of the policy changes at the state level. While UBJJ serves as the designated State Advisory Group for the federal **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA)** and establishes a comprehensive compliance plan to meet eligibility for federal grants. UBJJ then subgrants federal funding statewide in a variety of program areas including delinquency prevention, positive youth development, juvenile justice system improvement, and juvenile record expungement services. The RED Collaborative is a branch of UBJJ that was created to help address and maintain compliance with the fourth core protection of the JJDPA. This requires states to assess and address racial and ethnic disparities at key points in the youth justice system.

During the legislative session, stakeholders from all three groups come together weekly to discuss legislation that may have a direct or ancillary impact on the juvenile justice system. The JJOC take official positions, discuss key areas of support or concern and communicate these to CCJJ or works directly with the bill sponsor on the potential impact of the proposed legislation.

JUVENILE JUSTICE BILL HIGHLIGHTS

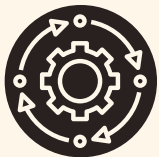
The following bills directly impacts the juvenile justice system or are legislation that either JJOC worked on with the sponsor or are a result of an interim working group.



HB 188 Sub 3 — Juvenile Justice Amendments (PASSED)

This bill:

- Clarifies search and seizures in the school setting
- Creates a cap for school based alternatives for drug possession offenses on school grounds
- Creates a statewide definition for juvenile and school-based recidivism
- Adds specific drug-related offenses to the Nonjudicial ineligibility list



HB 48 Sub 4 — Criminal and Juvenile Justice Changes (PASSED)

This bill as it relates to juvenile justice:

- Allows a judge to decide whether an individual who committed aggravated murder at age 17 but is sentenced at 18 should be placed in juvenile secure care or the adult system



SB 167 — Reintegration for Disciplined Student Amendments (PASSED)

This bill:

- Allows a school board to deny enrollment if a student have any school safety incidents or safe-school violations
- Requires a school to send that record over to the new school within five days of it being requested
- Clarifies reintegration plan processes as it relates multidisciplinary teams, reintegration plan interventions, summer break, and effective dates
- Clarifies JJOC has a role to train stakeholders on new JJ legislation



HB 465 — Juvenile Court Amendments (DID NOT PASS)

This bill allows a juvenile court to conditionally suspend a minor's order for detention.

SENTENCING COMMISSION

Reviewed

76
bills!

Background

Utah's Sentencing Commission consists of seventeen statutorily delegated and appointed members representing all facets of the criminal justice system including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim representatives, law enforcement, treatment specialists, corrections, parole authorities, and juvenile justice representatives.

Sentencing Commission Legislative Work

2023's SB 200 made some changes to the Sentencing Commission's function as it pertains to the legislative session. The Sentencing Commission no longer takes independent public positions on bills. Instead, the commission reviews legislation, identifies concerns or potential improvements to legislation, discusses its findings with bill sponsors, and makes recommendations to inform CCJJ's positions on bills.

Another change taking effect in 2024 is that the Sentencing Guidelines must be approved by the full legislature as a concurrent resolution. The Sentencing Commission presented its Adult Sentencing, Release, and Supervision Guidelines and Juvenile Disposition Guidelines to the House Judiciary and House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committees in November, 2025. Those committees put forward HCR 2 - Concurrent Resolution Authorizing Adult Sentencing and Supervision Length Guidelines and Juvenile Disposition Guidelines, which was unanimously approved by the legislature.

SENTENCING BILL HIGHLIGHTS

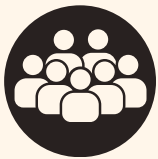
The following bills are legislation that either the Sentencing Commission worked on with the sponsor or are a result of an interim working group.



HCR 2 - Concurrent Resolution Authorizing Adult Sentencing and Supervision Length Guidelines and Juvenile Disposition Guidelines (PASSED)

This resolution authorizes the 2026 Sentencing Guidelines, which will go into effect on May 6, 2026. The new Sentencing Guidelines include the following important changes:

- Counting certain Class B Misdemeanors with public safety implications towards criminal history score;
- Revised jail as a condition of probation matrix, with more serious penalties for felony person and sex offenses, and revised duration ranges.



HB 274 Sub 3 - Sentencing Commission Amendments (PASSED)

Changes the makeup of the sentencing commission to add an additional prosecutor, an additional sheriff, and a chief of police. Removes designated juvenile representation, although still allows for juvenile representatives to be appointed. Requires the sentencing commission to revise its guidelines, including felony sex and person offenses. Requires the commission to consider additional public safety criteria when revising its guidelines.



HB 24 Sub 2 - Criminal Penalty Amendments (PASSED)

Revises certain offenses in the traffic code to be more consistent with other traffic penalties.



HB 113 Sub 2- Emergency Reporting Abuse Amendments (PASSED)

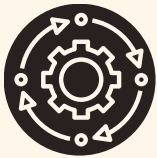
Enhances certain penalties for emergency reporting abuse, and creates a new offense for reporting a non-emergency. The commission provided input to narrow the scope of these changes to be more targeted to deliberate reporting abuses.

SENTENCING BILL HIGHLIGHTS



SB 72 Sub 1 - Obscene Animal Abuse Amendments (PASSED)

Clarifies that offenses involving distribution of obscenity and pornography include animal abuse material, if it meets the obscenity elements. The commission provided input that narrowed the offense to ensure it met constitutional standards.



SB 92 Sub 1 - Prosecution Amendments (PASSED)

Allows a subsequent homicide prosecution after an original conviction for an offense involving serious bodily injury, in a case where the victim later died as a result of those injuries. The commission provided input to ensure any time served towards the original conviction would count towards the subsequent conviction, and other technical clarifications.



HB 114 Sub 1 - Adult Oriented Performance Amendments (DID NOT PASS)

Recodifies offenses involving lewd or obscene performances, in an effort to increase clarity for enforcement and prosecution, without infringing on 1st Amendment rights. The commission provided this as a sensible solution to a controversial policy issue that has been raised in the last three sessions.

VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSION

Took a position on

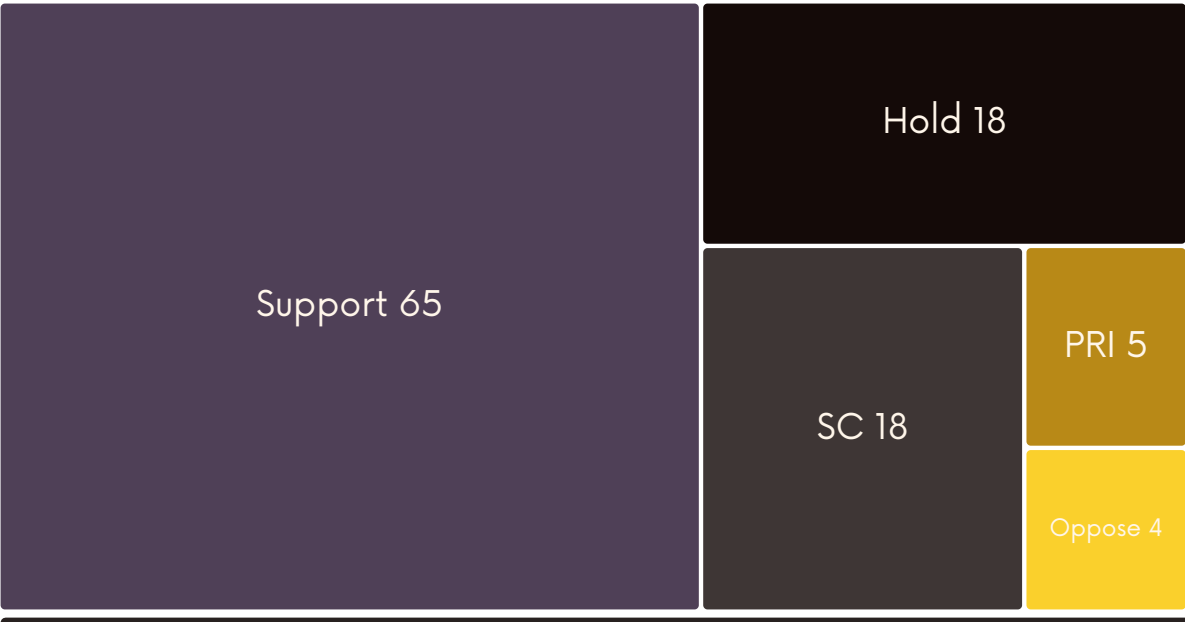
401
bills!

Background

The Utah Victim Services Commission (VSC), composed of 15 voting members and vested partners, met weekly during the 66th legislative session to discuss and elevate victim services. As outlined in 63M-7-904, Duties of the Commission, the VSC shall advocate for the adoption, repeal, or modification of laws or proposed legislation in the interest of victims of crime. The Commission's diverse membership includes directors of three federally recognized state coalitions, a prosecutor, a defense attorney, a police chief, a system based victim advocate, a state legislator, a representative from the Attorney General's office, and the directors or designees of state agencies including: CCJJ, UOVC, UDC, DMA, CJC, and DPS. As a public meeting additional voices for victims and the criminal justice system consistently attended and were invited to participate. This collaborative body focuses on improving Utah's response to all those affected by crime.

Voting Summary

Overall, the VSC reviewed and took a position on 401 bills and substitutes this session. Of those, 290 were beyond the scope of the VSC's focus, and of the remaining 111, the VSC took a position of Priority Support (5), Support (65), Support in Concept (18) Oppose (4), Hold (18), No Position (1). Staff and members actively engaged with other groups such as CCJJ, SWAP, UDVC, UCASA, etc. to learn more about proposed legislation and discuss steps to improve as needed. In addition, multiple conversations with legislators occurred in an effort to improve language and impact on victims.



VSC BILL HIGHLIGHTS

The Victim Services Commission (VSC) remains actively engaged in policy discussions with stakeholders and legislators throughout the legislative process. Frequently, we are approached by legislators, victims, and community members seeking our expertise on proposed policies and initiatives.

Throughout the session, the VSC holds weekly meetings with members of the VSC and other engaged community members. This provided us with diverse perspectives among those working to improve and provide better services to crime victims. Proposed legislation is discussed and outcomes explored to try to ensure better outcomes for victims and public safety through the criminal justice process. When concerns are raised, contact is made with the sponsor and efforts to resolve the concerns occur.

The VSC was represented, in both the house and senate, at 28 committee sessions, providing testimony at 31 different bill hearings as well as being acknowledged (without testimony given) as a supporter at 13 additional bill hearings. This presence and engagement with the process fostered new relationships and strengthened our role in shaping legislation that positively impacts the lives of victims and the public whom we serve.



HB 34 Victim Rights Amendments (PASSED)

This legislation revises and clarifies the processes and definitions pertaining to the protection and enforcement of victims' rights. The bill establishes the position of the Victims' Rights Coordinator and streamlines the complaint review process to ensure timely resolutions for victims.



HB 89 Use of Polygraph Amendments (PASSED)

This bill restricts the utilization of polygraph examinations for victims of sexual assault. Law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, the court, or any other government official are prohibited from requesting or requiring a victim to take a polygraph.

VSC BILL HIGHLIGHTS



SJR 1 Joint Resolution Amending Rules of Evidence Concerning Crimes or Other Acts (PASSED)

This legislation revises and clarifies the processes and definitions pertaining to the protection and enforcement of victims' rights. The bill establishes the position of the Victims' Rights Coordinator and streamlines the complaint review process to ensure timely resolutions for victims.



HB 102 Victim Privacy Amendments (PASSED)

This bill grants a crime victim the right to request the substitution of the victim's initials for the victim's name in publicly accessible criminal justice documents. Agencies are mandated to maintain any information concerning the victim that is necessary to comply with a lawful court order.



SB 290 Victim and Witness Privacy Amendments (PASSED)

This bill addresses the privacy of a victim and witness in a criminal investigation by defining the requirements for accessing nonpublic electronic data. A law enforcement agency is required to implement a policy governing nonpublic victim and witness data.



HB 539 Public Safety Modifications (PASSED)

This bill defines and modifies terms related to domestic violence, including the addition of an individual who is 18 years of age or older and is the sibling, stepsibling, or foster sibling of the other party. The bill further clarifies that a Jail Release Agreement may not be waived by the individual who is arrested or issued a citation for the qualifying offense. The bill also extends workplace protective orders to include volunteers.



HB 345 Victim Amendments (DID NOT PASS)

This bill sought to modify the eligibility requirements for a victim reparations award to include mental health counseling resulting from a sexual assault that occurred in a correctional facility, provided the individual is no longer incarcerated. It also proposed adding hit and run as a qualifying offense for a victim to receive reparations. The passage failed for lack of time during the final day of the legislature.

CONCLUSION

The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, along with the Sentencing Commission, Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee, and Victim Services Commission understand the tremendous work that can go into just one bill. The summary of bills do not capture the phone calls, messages, and meetings, that took place throughout the past year and during the session. We applaud the efforts of the legislature and stakeholders working together on important issues for the state of Utah. We hope to be a resource for criminal and juvenile justice related legislation and look forward to working together during the interim.

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