

APPROVEDFOURTH DISTRICT VICTIMS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING June 2, 2025	
Committee	Fourth District Victims' Rights Committee Meeting
Date Time Location	June 2, 2025 1:00-2:00 pm Virtual: https://utah-gov.zoom.us/j/88233404467?pwd=QMglbXmAOrHyyWB3WWObLBdONJPb2d.1
Members Present	<u>Virtual Attendance:</u> Sandi Johnson, Lesli Shields, Kevin Thurman, Scott Sweat, Irv Hale, Debbie Jacobson, Mike Smith
Staff & Visitors	<u>Staff:</u> Katie Fox <u>Visitors:</u> Christopher Ballard, Chris Buckley, J.N., Christiana Wagstaff
Agenda Item	Welcome & Introductions/Establish Quorum
Notes	Sandi Johnson welcomed the Committee. Sandi established that a quorum was present.
Agenda Item	Approve Minutes from 05.05.2025 Meeting
Notes	Sandi Johnson inquired if everyone had a chance to review the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion: Scott Sweat made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2025 meeting. Lesli Shields seconded the motion. Debbie Jacobson abstained from voting. The motion passed unanimously.
Agenda Item	Review of Complaints
Notes	<p>1. J.N. Complaint</p> <p>The Committee discussed J.N.'s complaint. The Committee received an additional written response from the Utah County Attorney's Office. Christopher Ballard and Chris Buckley were present from the Utah County Attorney's Office (UCAO). Sheriff Smith and Christiana Wagstaff were present from the Utah County Sheriff's Office (UCSO). J.N. addressed the Committee. J.N. highlighted the ongoing impact of the delay, stating the abuser's case is now projected to extend into 2026 due to the judge's recusal. This delay has significantly diminished J.N.'s relationship with their children and access to their home, as the courts require a conviction before considering these issues. Christopher Ballard (UCAO) acknowledged that an employee failed to notify J.N. of the declination. The employee was disciplined and has since left the office. UCAO is implementing systemic changes to prevent similar issues. Sheriff Smith did not have additional information regarding the communication breakdown but committed to looking into it. Christiana Wagstaff from Victim Services at UCSO explained that their program usually fills communication gaps for cases with filed charges, but this case, initially classified as a "family problem," did not trigger their standard procedures. The committee identified a potential systemic issue in communication between UCAO and UCSO, especially regarding documentation and follow-up on requests for further information. Emails from UCAO requesting follow-up are not automatically included in police reports or automatically escalated to supervisors.</p> <p>Motions: Kevin Thurman made a motion that the Committee find a violation of J.N.'s rights under 77-37-3(1)(b) of the right to be informed as to their role in the criminal justice process by the UCAO due to the failure to notify J.N. of the declination. Kevin Thurman also included in his motion that the Committee did not find a violation of J.N.'s rights by the UCSO. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Action Items: Sandi Johnson will prepare letters to the Utah County Attorney's Office and the Utah County Sheriff's Office informing them of the Committee's decisions. Sandi Johnson will include in the letters that the Committee has no further recommendations for the UCAO as they have already taken steps to implement systemic changes. The Committee also recommended that the UCSO examine its systems for receiving requests for further information from the UCAO. Katie Fox will send the letters. Sandi Johnson will also prepare a</p>

letter to J.N. informing him of the Committee's findings. . Katie Fox will send the letter to J.N. and offer resources.

2. S.L. Complaint

The Committee discussed S.L.'s complaint. The complaint was originally submitted in both English and Spanish. This complaint involved a sexual assault case investigated by Provo Police Department (PD), where the Utah County Attorney's Office (UCAO) declined the case and sent a declination letter to S.L. The letter was sent to the perpetrator's address, where S.L. had been living at the time of the offense, instead of to S.L.'s current address, which she updated with the Provo Police Department. In the letter, the name of the person at the UCAO that S.L. could contact if they had questions about the declination was left blank. The letter to S.L. was in Spanish. In the complaint, the victim highlighted multiple listed victim rights. Katie Fox reached out with a certified interpreter and learned that due to a lack of understanding of the process, S.L. highlighted anything she thought relevant, but did not have specific complaints related to those rights. Katie Fox clarified her complaints, and offered resources. Chris Buckley (UCAO) agreed to have a Spanish-speaking victim coordinator contact the victim and schedule a meeting with a prosecutor to explain the declination. Christiana noted that Provo PD now has three Spanish-speaking advocates.

Motions: Sandi Johnson made a motion that there was not a violation of S.L.'s victim's rights by the UCAO. Scott Sweat seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items: Sandi Johnson will prepare a letter to S.L. informing them of the closure of the complaint. Katie Fox will send the letter in both English and Spanish. Katie Fox has already been offering resources to S.L. Katie Fox will also reach out to the director of victim services at Provo PD and discuss the issue of passing on updated victim contact information to the screening agencies.

3. L.M.

The complaint was submitted by the mother of L.M. The complainant claimed multiple victim rights violations on behalf of L.M., including fairness, respect, appropriate sentencing, assistance in the process, clear explanations, and personal property return. All of the alleged violations were related to the criminal episode for which L.M. pleaded guilty and was sentenced to prison. The complainant wanted the victim of the domestic violence crime for which L.M. had been sentenced to prison to be charged for lying. The Committee discussed the definition of a victim under 77-38-2(9), where a "victim" is defined as a person against whom conduct is alleged to have been perpetrated, unless they are the accused or criminally responsible. L.M. does not qualify as a victim under this definition. The complainant also does not qualify as a victim.

Motions: Sandi Johnson made a motion that there was not a violation because L.M. and the complainant do not meet the statutory definition of a victim in this instance. Debbie Jacobson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items: Sandi Johnson will prepare a letter informing the complainant of the closure of the complaint. Katie Fox will send the letter to the complainant.

4. A.A.

The Committee discussed A.A.'s complaint. The complaint concerned issues related to a protective order hearing in Wasatch County, which was part of divorce proceedings. The complainant alleged violations of rights including fairness and respect, being heard at criminal justice hearings and sentencing, personal property return, and speedy disposition.

	<p>The Committee discussed that a protective order hearing, unless it is a <i>criminal</i> protective order, is not considered an "important criminal justice hearing" under the victim rights statute. This case did not involve a criminal protective order. The other potential victims' rights violations listed in the complaint were not applicable as there was no criminal case.</p> <p>Motions: Debbie Jacobson made a motion to close the complaint with no violation of victims' rights. Scott Sweat seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Action Items: Sandi Johnson will prepare a letter to A.A. to close the complaint. Katie Fox will send the letter and offer resources to A.A.</p> <p>5. B.S.</p> <p>The complaint filed by B.S. was submitted a few business days prior to the meeting. The Committee determined they would continue this complaint to the next meeting due to time constraints and the pending loss of a quorum.</p>
Agenda Item	Public Comment
	Public comment was given during the discussion of the complaints.
Agenda Item	Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn
Notes	<p>Lesli Shields made a motion to adjourn. Scott Sweat seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The committee adjourned.</p> <p>Next Meeting: July 7, 2025, 1:00 pm- 2:00 pm Zoom link: https://utah-gov.zoom.us/j/88233404467?pwd=QMqlbXmAOrHyyWB3WWObLBdONjPb2d.1</p>