

SENTENCING COMMISSION MINUTES – DRS approved

Committee	Utah Sentencing Commission
Date	Thursday, February 12th, 2026
Time	12 PM – 2 PM
Location	Hybrid Zoom Virtual meeting – CCJJ Offices
Members Present	<u>Virtual Attendance</u> : April Graham, Liliana Olvera-Arbon (for Chief Sol Oberg), Chris Yannelli, Sraiah Donnahoo (JJOC), Judge Brody Keisel
	<u>In-Person Attendance</u> : Mike Schoenfeld (for Jared Garcia), Tom Ross, Blake Hills, Michael Dreschel (for Neira Siaperas), Steve Burton (for David Ferguson), Richard Mauro, Stewart Young, Ryan Robinson, Sheriff Mike Smith, Rebecca Brown (for Christina Zidow), Pam Vickrey
Staff & Visitors	<u>Staff</u> : Danica Bodley, Dan Strong, Katie Fox (virtual), Chyleen Richey (virtual), Dr. Michele Leslie. Marlesse Jones, Erica Wood (virtual), Bud Powell (virtual)
	<u>Visitors</u> : Carl Hollan, Brett Robinson, Glendon Mitchell, Matt Durmont (virtual), Tim Kincaid (virtual), MayKela Cox (virtual), Jacob Glenn (virtual)
Agenda Item	Welcome and Introductions – Pam Vickrey, USC Chair
Notes	<p>Pam Vickrey welcomes the commission to the February 12th, 2026 Utah Sentencing Commission meeting.</p> <p>The commission reviewed the previous meeting minutes from Thursday, February 5th, 2026.</p> <p>Motion: Blake Hills motions for the commission to approve the minutes as presented. Tom Ross seconds the motion. The motion passes.</p> <p>Liliana Olvera-Arbon (for Chief Sol Oberg) has joined the meeting.</p> <p>The Commission reviewed and voted to support a proposal to revise the sentencing guidelines, specifically targeting the "jail matrix" used when jail is considered as a condition of probation. Shift from JRI Principles</p> <p>For several years, the jail matrix included "zero days" as the floor for all offenses, a practice initiated during JRI. The 2026 proposal eliminates this floor for many categories to better reflect legislative expectations of accountability.</p> <p>Form 1 (General Matrix) Revisions: Shading for first-degree felony "other" and second-degree felony "person" offenses will change from "Presumptive Probation" (dark gray) to "Jail as a Condition of Probation" (light gray). This signals that these cases should no longer start with a recommendation for probation only.</p> <p>Form 5 (Jail as Condition of Probation) Revisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serious Offenses: Recommended jail stays for high-history and high-severity felonies (such as those involving death or first-degree offenses) are being returned to pre-2014 levels. ● Sex Offenses: Second-degree felony sex offenses saw the most significant change, increasing the recommended stay from a 105-day midpoint (range of 0–210) back to pre-JRI levels. ● Removal of Midpoints: The 2016 practice of recommending a "midpoint" of a range has been largely discarded in favor of a specific top-line recommendation with a narrowed range. <p>Michael Dreschel (for Neira Siaperas) has left the meeting.</p>

	<p>Motion: Sheriff Mike Smith motions for the commission to <u>support</u> the revisions as presented to Form 5 and HCR002 Bill. Stewart Young seconds the motion. The motion passed. (11-1-2)</p> <p>Support(s): Eleven (11) Supports; Stewart Young, Ryan Robinson, Sheriff Mike Smith, Rebecca Brown (for Christina Zidow), Liliana Olvera-Arbon (for Chief Sol Oberg), Chris Yannelli, Steve Burton (for David Ferguson), Blake Hills, Tom Ross, April Graham, Mike Schoenfeld (for Jared Garcia)</p> <p>Opposition(s): One (1) Opposition; Richard Mauro</p> <p>Abstention(s): Two (2) Abstentions; Pam Vickrey, Sariah Donnahoo</p>
Agenda Item	2026 Legislative Session Bill Review – Dan Strong, USC Director
Notes	<p>The Commission evaluated several bills, reaching the following formal positions.</p> <p><u>HB274S02 Sentencing Commission Amendments</u> <i>2nd sub: 3 collapsed defense attorney (with 1 rural), 3 prosecutors (with 1 rural), 3 sheriffs, jjoc moved to a non-voting member</i></p> <p>The bill proposes collapsing the number of defense attorneys, prosecutors, and sheriffs to three each (ensuring rural representation) and moving the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee (JJOC) to a non-voting member.</p> <p>While some members, like Steve Burton (for David Ferguson), noted this was a "tough couple of weeks" and felt like an "attack on the defense voice," the Commission ultimately voted to support the bill due to the sponsor's willingness to collaborate and the movement away from more extreme original versions of the legislation.</p> <p>Liliana Olvera-Arbon (for Chief Sol Oberg) expressed disappointment that a victim survivor did not get placed into the commission as an advocate for victims, with the new amendments.</p> <p>Michael Dreschel (for Neira Siaperas) has joined the meeting.</p> <p>Judge Brody Keisel has left the meeting.</p> <p>Liliana Olvera-Arbon (for Chief Sol Oberg) has left the meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Tom Ross motions for the commission to <u>support</u> House Bill 274 Substitute 02. Stewart Young seconds the motion. The motion passed. (13-0-1)</p> <p>Support(s): Thirteen (13) Supports; Stewart Young, Ryan Robinson, Sheriff Mike Smith, Rebecca Brown (for Christina Zidow), Chris Yannelli, Steve Burton (for David Ferguson), Blake Hills, Tom Ross, April Graham, Mike Schoenfeld (for Jared Garcia), Pam Vickrey, Sariah Donnahoo (JJOC)</p> <p>Abstention(s): One (1) Abstention; Richard Mauro</p> <p><u>HB0284 Murder Offense Amendments</u> <i>Amends the offense of murder when the actor acts in a depraved indifference to human life to clarify that the actor does not need to have a specific intent to kill a specific individual.</i></p>

	<p>Motion: Sheriff Mike Smith motions for the commission to <u>support</u> on House Bill 284. Stewart Young seconds the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p><u>HB354 Rescue Tracking Equipment Offense Amendments</u> <i>creates a class B misd. for when an actor commits destroying, tampering with, or unlawfully interacting with rescue tracking equipment if the actor: destroys rescue tracking equipment; damages, disables, removes, or tampers with rescue tracking equipment; and the conduct described in Subsection (2)(b)(i) inhibits or impedes the proper use or functioning of the rescue tracking equipment; or interacts with a piece of rescue tracking equipment knowing that the action will result in a false report to a law enforcement agency of an individual who is in need of emergency assistance.</i></p> <p>Motion: Stewart Young motions for the commission to <u>support</u> on House Bill 354. Sheriff Mike Smith seconds the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p><u>HB465 Juvenile Court Amendments</u> <i>Allows a juvenile court to conditionally suspend a minor's order for detention for up to five days</i></p> <p>The Commission voted to hold this bill pending a significant substitute regarding suspended detention for minors.</p> <p>Motion: Tom Ross motions for the commission to <u>hold</u> on House Bill 465 for further discussion and action. Stewart Young seconds the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
Agenda Item	Public Comment
	Public comment time was given but none was spoken.
Agenda Item	Adjourn
Notes	<p>Motion: Ryan Robinson motions for the commission to adjourn. Stewart Young seconds the motion. The motion was unanimously agreed upon.</p> <p>The commission adjourns.</p> <p>Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19th, 2026 from 12 PM - 2 PM. Location: <u>Anchor Location:</u> CCJJ Conference Room, E. Senate Building Google Meet Link: https://meet.google.com/ccd-sbnq-xsj</p>
DISCLAIMER	Please note that these meeting minutes have been primarily generated or assisted by an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. These notes have been edited by staff to ensure accuracy and completeness.