



# Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

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March 30, 2026

**Senator Evan J. Vickers**

Chair, Business and Labor Interim Committee  
Utah State Senate

**Representative Cory Maloy**

Chair, Business and Labor Interim Committee  
Utah House of Representatives

Senator Vickers and Representative Maloy,

Enclosed is a policy memorandum from Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL) requesting that the Business and Labor Interim Committee adopt a 2026 interim study item. The memorandum is titled *Good Landlord Program Internal Contradiction and Fair-Chance Housing Reform in Utah's Rental Licensing Market* and is submitted for distribution to the committee and for consideration in developing the committee's 2026 study agenda.

The request is grounded in a structural tension within the Salt Lake City Good Landlord Program (GLP), which operates across 15 Utah municipalities. The proposed study item asks the committee to assess whether the program's screening mandate is consistent with sound rental market policy and current federal housing guidance, and whether a shift toward individualized assessments would better advance the state's housing stability and market efficiency goals.

This memorandum is framed squarely within the committee's jurisdiction over rental markets, landlord licensing, and housing policy, and does not ask the committee to take a position on registry law or criminal sentencing. The GLP's screening criteria function as a regulatory condition tied to a financial incentive—an administrative policy choice that may be revised through existing processes without new legislation. UTRSOL is prepared to support the committee's review with comprehensive case-level data from its 121-case, 10-county housing assistance dataset, along with GLP program materials, peer jurisdiction policies, HUD guidance, and ongoing technical assistance.

We respectfully request that this memorandum be distributed to the committee and co-chairs, and that it be considered for placement on the proposed 2026 interim study item list prior to the April 15, 2026 Legislative Management Committee deadline.

Respectfully submitted,

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Business and Labor Interim Committee, Utah State Legislature

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL)

March 30, 2026

Request for 2026 Interim Study:

Good Landlord Program Internal Contradiction and Fair-Chance Housing Reform in Utah's Rental Licensing Market

REF: Salt Lake City Good Landlord Program (est. Oct. 2004)

## Executive Summary

This memorandum requests that the Business and Labor Interim Committee adopt, as a 2026 interim study item, the following question: Does the Good Landlord Program — a landlord licensing and economic incentive structure operating across 15 Utah municipalities — create an internal contradiction with the state's housing stability and rental market efficiency goals by mandating categorical screening criteria that remove compliant rental applicants from the market regardless of individual risk? The study would evaluate whether these criteria function as a structural barrier to housing access that in turn generates downstream system costs.

## Why This Committee

The Good Landlord Program is not a criminal justice instrument. It is a landlord licensing and economic incentive program — administered through the rental market, governed by landlord-tenant policy, and operated through the city's business licensing authority. The screening criteria it mandates are a regulatory condition attached to a financial incentive, and they directly shape rental market access across 15 Utah municipalities. That is squarely within this committee's jurisdiction over rental markets, landlord licensing, and housing policy. The criminal justice dimensions of this problem exist; they belong to the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice committee. The market distortion created by the GLP's categorical screening mandate belongs here.

## I. The Good Landlord Program: Structure and Scope

Does the Good Landlord Program — a landlord licensing and economic incentive structure operating across 15 Utah municipalities — create an internal contradiction with the state's housing stability and rental market efficiency goals by mandating categorical screening criteria that remove compliant rental applicants from the market regardless of individual risk?

Examining how these screening rules affect tenants and landlords can reveal unintended consequences. A careful review could inform potential adjustments to better align the program with state housing and market objectives. Understanding this tension is critical for informed policy decisions surrounding this issue.

### **A. What the Program Is**

The GLP is, at its core, an economic instrument. It uses financial incentives attached to a business licensing structure to shape landlord behavior in the rental market. Participation is voluntary; the incentive is financial. The obligations attached to participation are regulatory conditions, not statutory requirements. This matters for the study item requested in this memorandum: because the GLP's screening criteria are regulatory conditions rather than statutory mandates, they can be revised by program administrators through administrative process — without new legislation, without a change to registry law, and without any legislative body taking a position on criminal justice policy.

### **B. What the Screening Mandate Does**

As a condition of receiving GLP financial incentives, participating landlords are mandated to conduct criminal background checks on applicants and are directed toward categorical denial of applicants with sex offense convictions or registry status. This categorical screening requirement does not ask landlords to evaluate individual risk. It directs a blanket outcome — denial — based on a status category. The result is a landlord licensing incentive program that actively discourages participating landlords from making individualized tenancy decisions, regardless of an applicant's current supervision status, rehabilitation record, employment stability, or time since offense.

### **C. The Geographic Reach**

The GLP's categorical screening mandate now shapes rental market access across 15 Utah municipalities. This is not a local anomaly confined to one city's housing policy. It is a template that has propagated across the Wasatch Front and that other municipalities look to as a model. UTRSOL's data shows that 81% of its housing assistance cases — 121 cases across 10 months — were concentrated in Salt Lake, Davis, and Weber counties, the primary geographic footprint of GLP-participating municipalities. The geographic correlation between GLP market penetration and documented housing search failure is a direct object of study for this committee.

## **II. The Internal Contradiction**

The GLP's internal contradiction is structural and operates at the level of the city's own budgetary commitments. It is not a theoretical tension; it is a documented operational failure that produces measurable fiscal consequences and that UTRSOL's data makes visible for the first time.

### **The Core Contradiction**

Salt Lake City funds the Housing Stability Division and its Homeless Engagement and Response Team (HEART) to address chronic homelessness among its most difficult-to-house populations. Simultaneously, through the GLP, the city subsidizes exclusionary screening that removes compliant rental applicants — specifically, individuals on the sex offense registry — from access to a significant share of the city's rental market. This creates a structural contradiction between the city's housing stability objectives and its rental market practices.

The same individuals excluded by GLP-screened landlords appear in the HEART caseload. The city is funding the mechanism that creates the problem and funding the response to the problem's consequences — with no analytical framework to evaluate the net cost.

This contradiction is directly within the Business and Labor Interim Committee's jurisdiction because it is, at bottom, a question about whether a publicly subsidized landlord licensing incentive program is producing coherent outcomes relative to the city's own housing stability investments. The GLP is an economic instrument. Its internal contradiction is an economic question. The committee's jurisdiction over rental markets and landlord licensing makes it the natural body to examine whether the program's screening mandate is consistent with rational market and housing policy.

### III. Ten Months of Market Data: What the GLP Is Doing

Between June 2025 and March 2026, UTRSOL documented 121 housing assistance cases involving 197 individuals across 10 Utah counties. These are individuals seeking housing assistance — not a population that is uniformly homeless or currently subject to GPS monitoring. The cases were not sought out; they arrived through inbound contact, before UTRSOL had a formal intake process. The data constitutes the only field-level documentation of GLP market effects on this population currently available.

Indicator	Finding	GLP Market Relevance
Cases in GLP-municipality footprint	81% (Salt Lake, Davis, Weber)	Concentration matches GLP geographic reach, not just population density
Primary barrier for single registrants (55% of cases)	Landlord automated screening and blanket denial	Categorical GLP screening criteria eliminate individualized assessment
Couples cases (31% of cases)	Non-registrant partner's clean rental history discarded when bundled with registrant application	GLP categorical denial penalizes a non-offending tenant as a market unit
Professional case managers contacting UTRSOL	17	Each represents a case unresolvable through existing housing systems
GLP-municipality agencies contacting UTRSOL independently	14	None recruited — each hit the same market wall independently
Jurisdictions that have revised GLP-equivalent screening	Federal policy (HUD 2016, 2024) and municipal precedent (Seattle 2018)	Administrative reform pathway is established and documented

The 81% Wasatch Front concentration in UTRSOL's data is not attributable to population density alone. It reflects the density of GLP-participating landlords in the urban core and the

severity of categorical screening in that market. Registrants excluded from Salt Lake City rental inventory are searching northward into Davis County without encountering meaningfully different conditions — because the GLP template has replicated across that market. The geographic search pattern is a market effect, not an individual preference. It belongs in an analysis of rental market structure.

#### **IV. Fair-Chance Housing as a Market Policy Framework**

Fair-chance housing is not an ideological position. It is a market policy framework — increasingly adopted by jurisdictions across the country — that holds that landlord licensing and incentive programs should require individualized risk assessment rather than categorical screening, and that blanket denial based on a status category is an inefficient and inequitable allocation of rental market access. This approach is designed to expand the qualified tenant pool while maintaining property management standards and risk controls.

The Business and Labor Interim Committee's jurisdiction over rental markets, landlord licensing, and housing policy makes it the appropriate body to evaluate whether Utah's GLP-structured rental market is operating consistent with fair-chance housing principles that peer jurisdictions have adopted through administrative — not legislative — reform. This review would allow the committee to assess alignment between current program practices and evidence-based housing stability outcomes.

##### **A. What Individualized Assessment Requires**

Neither Seattle's 2018 ordinance nor HUD's policies mandates that landlords accept all applicants with criminal records. Both require that participating landlords in city incentive programs conduct an individualized assessment weighing a defined set of factors rather than applying categorical denial. The assessment framework is well-established in the literature and in peer practice:

- Time since offense
- Rehabilitation completion status
- Employment stability
- Current supervision status
- Community support network
- Rental and housing history

These factors allow participating landlords to make market-rational decisions about tenancy risk rather than applying a blanket exclusion that eliminates all individualized judgment. The outcome is not mandated acceptance; it is mandated consideration. That is a regulatory condition appropriate for a landlord licensing incentive program to impose. It preserves landlord discretion while ensuring that decisions are based on relevant, case-specific information. This structure aligns program incentives with both housing stability goals and efficient market functioning.

## **B. What Individualized Assessment Does Not Require**

A study of GLP screening criteria reform does not require this committee to take a position on sex offense registry law, criminal sentencing, or the appropriateness of registration requirements. The GLP's screening criteria are a regulatory attachment to a financial incentive program. Revising those criteria is a question about landlord licensing policy and rental market regulation — not a question about criminal law. This committee can examine the GLP's internal contradiction and its market consequences without touching the underlying criminal justice framework. The registry exists; the question before this committee is whether the city's rental licensing program should require categorical denial based on registry status or individualized assessment based on tenancy-relevant factors. This study item concerns the regulatory conditions attached to a landlord licensing incentive program — it does not affect registry requirements, supervision law, or criminal penalties in any respect, and any committee member seeking confirmation of that jurisdictional boundary may request a statutory scope analysis from legislative counsel.

## **V. Peer Jurisdiction Precedents**

The reform this memorandum proposes — replacing categorical denial with individualized assessment in the Good Landlord Program's screening criteria — reflects a principle that federal housing policy has affirmed twice in the past decade and that at least one major municipal jurisdiction has codified into law. Neither precedent required a legislative body to take a position on registry law.

On April 4, 2016, HUD's Office of General Counsel issued guidance concluding that blanket criminal records bans are likely to violate the Fair Housing Act's disparate impact provisions. U.S. Dep't of Housing and Urban Dev., OGC Guidance on Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records (Apr. 4, 2016). The guidance states that a provider imposing a blanket prohibition without regard to when a conviction occurred or what has happened since “will not be able to meet” the burden of demonstrating a legitimate justification, and directs that individualized assessment is the legally sound alternative. HUD reinforced this in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on April 10, 2024.

Reducing Barriers to HUD-Assisted Housing, 89 Fed. Reg. 24726. The rulemaking's preamble observes that individualized assessment “already is required of housing providers under state and local law in much of the country” and “works in practice to effectively balance various equities.” The GLP operates through municipal incentives to private landlords, not through a HUD-assisted housing program. The mandatory federal exclusions applicable to federally subsidized housing under 42 U.S.C. § 13663 do not govern it. The GLP's categorical screening criteria are an administrative choice with no federal floor requiring them.

Seattle's Fair Chance Housing Ordinance, Seattle Municipal Code § 14.09 (Ordinance 125393, effective February 19, 2018), requires that adverse action based on criminal history in city-incentivized rental programs follow individualized review rather than categorical threshold

denial. It preserves the ability to screen for registry status — it requires only that screening occur through assessment, not automatic exclusion. It did not alter registry law. The GLP reform this memorandum proposes is structurally identical and operationally narrower. Both of these precedents collectively establish that individualized assessment before adverse housing action is mainstream administrative practice. This committee need not resolve any question about registry law to evaluate whether the GLP's categorical screening mandate is consistent with that standard, or whether the compliance costs it generates justify administrative revision.

## **VI. The Study Item We Are Requesting**

UTRSOL respectfully recommends a focused, evidence-based review of program practices and housing outcomes as part of the committee's work, and requests that this committee adopt the following as a 2026 interim study item:

### **Proposed Interim Study Item**

Good Landlord Program Screening Criteria and Fair-Chance Housing Reform: Examining whether the Good Landlord Program's categorical criminal history screening mandate — as a condition of landlord licensing incentives across 15 Utah municipalities — is consistent with rational rental market policy and with the direction of federal housing guidance (HUD OGC 2016; 89 Fed. Reg. 24726 (2024)), and whether revision of those criteria to require individualized assessment (as implemented in Seattle) would better align the program's incentive structure with the state's housing stability and market efficiency goals, without requiring new legislation or any position on criminal law.

This framing has a lower political temperature than a criminal justice framing precisely because it stays within the committee's home domain: landlord licensing, incentive program design, and rental market regulation. A committee study of whether the GLP's screening criteria are consistent with the program's stated housing stability objectives is a straightforward regulatory review question. Peer jurisdictions have already answered it. The committee's job is to evaluate whether Utah should follow that precedent, and if so, through what mechanism. This approach keeps the focus on program performance and market outcomes rather than broader policy debates. It also allows any recommended changes to be grounded in administrative feasibility and existing authority.

## **VII. The Three Actions Available Through Administrative Process**

UTRSOL's presentation to the Salt Lake City Housing Stability Division on March 25, 2026 identified three specific actions within or adjacent to the Division's existing administrative authority. Each requires no new legislation, no new budget, and no public position on registry law. A Business and Labor Interim Committee study of the GLP's internal contradiction would provide the legislative record that supports these actions and signals that the Legislature has considered the GLP's screening mandate as a policy matter — the condition under which administrative reform becomes politically viable. It would also clarify agency discretion, reducing risk and promoting consistent implementation across jurisdictions.

Action 1: Recommend GLP screening modification to require individualized assessment. The Salt Lake City Housing Stability Division can formally recommend to GLP program administrators that categorical denial criteria be replaced with an individualized assessment framework. This is an administrative recommendation within existing authority. It does not require the Division to take a position on registry law. It requires only that the Division identify the GLP's categorical screening criteria as inconsistent with the program's housing stability objectives — a conclusion the data already supports.

Action 2: Condition Division coordination agreements on shelter intake documentation. Where emergency shelters operate under Housing Stability Division funding relationships or coordination agreements, the Division can require shelters to produce written intake documentation for referred cases rather than applying categorical exclusion without record. This is a contract condition on existing relationships. It creates an evidentiary record where none currently exists and opens individualized review as the operative intake standard.

Action 3: Co-sponsor a multi-agency coordinating committee to aggregate field-level data. The Division, together with Fourth Street Clinic, VOA Utah, and The Road Home, can convene a working session to establish a shared data aggregation framework. This requires one two-hour working session and existing agency participation. Its output is a durable institutional record of GLP market effects that extends beyond what UTRSOL can document alone and that this committee could rely on in any subsequent study.

A Business and Labor Interim Committee study does not mandate any of these actions. It creates the legislative record that makes each of them administratively viable. Administrative bodies act more readily when there is documented legislative interest in the policy question. This committee's identification of the GLP's categorical screening criteria as a subject of interim study signals that the Legislature regards the question as open — which is the signal the Division needs to move.

### **VIII. What UTRSOL Is Offering the Committee**

In support of any study the committee adopts, UTRSOL can provide:

- Full geographic and household-type data from our 121-case, 10-county dataset, disaggregated to identify cases in GLP-participating municipality footprints
- Documentation of the 14 agencies that independently contacted UTRSOL — including the Salt Lake City Housing Division and the Salt Lake Police Department — and the specific barriers each encountered in the rental market
- GLP program documentation, including the full text of the screening criteria as applied in Salt Lake City, and comparable criteria from other participating municipalities
- Peer jurisdiction ordinance and administrative policy documentation for Seattle (2018) with assessment framework language that has been operationalized, and full text of HUD's 2016 OGC guidance and 2024 NPRM relevant to the GLP's categorical screening criteria

- Technical support for any committee inquiry directed to the Salt Lake City Housing Stability Division, GLP program administrators, or the Weber Housing Authority
- Coordination with the proposed multi-agency stakeholder committee to expand the evidentiary base beyond what UTRSOL can document alone

UTRSOL presented the underlying data to HEART on March 25, 2026. That meeting is one node in a developing institutional record. The Division's response will inform the evidentiary basis available to this committee as it considers the study item.

## **IX. Conclusion**

The Good Landlord Program is a landlord licensing and economic incentive structure. Its categorical screening criteria are a regulatory condition attached to a financial subsidy — not a statutory mandate, not a criminal law requirement, and not outside the reach of administrative revision. The program's internal contradiction — subsidizing exclusionary screening while simultaneously funding the homelessness response that manages that screening's consequences — is a market policy question. It belongs before this committee.

UTRSOL's ten months of field data, combined with the federal policy record from HUD and the peer jurisdiction precedents from Seattle, provide the evidentiary basis for a study that stays squarely within this committee's jurisdiction, carries lower political temperature than a criminal justice framing, and produces an actionable recommendation on a question federal policy and peer jurisdictions have already answered. We are available to present additional data, documentation, or technical support at any stage of the committee's engagement.

Respectfully submitted,  
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