

Number 2026-60



**Utah Trafficking In-Persons (UTIP) Conference
August 25-26, 2026
Conference Analysis**

September 2026

Office of
UTAH FOR RATIONAL SEX OFFENSE LAWS



Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

32 W 200 S STE 302 • SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101
(801) 871-5215 • COMMUNICATIONS@UTRSOL.ORG

About This Report and the UTIP Conference

The 2026 Utah Trafficking in Persons (UTIP) Conference was a free, two-day statewide conference held August 25–26, 2026, at the North Capitol Building on the Utah State Capitol grounds. It was co-hosted by the Utah Attorney General's Office, the Asian Association of Utah (AAU), and the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force, and was designed to train attendees on best practices for supporting survivors of human trafficking and to strengthen Utah's multidisciplinary response to sex and labor trafficking.

Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws (UTRSOL) is a Salt Lake City-based policy research and advocacy nonprofit focused on evidence-based reform of Utah's sex offense registry laws. Several UTRSOL board members attended both days of the conference in order to understand the anti-trafficking ecosystem UTRSOL operates adjacent to, and specifically to investigate an open legislative question: how labor trafficking convictions intersect with Utah's sex offense registry statute.

This report synthesizes findings from both days of the conference, drawing on session transcripts and conference program materials. It is intended to give a reader who was not able to attend a complete picture of what was presented, what it means for UTRSOL's work, and what open questions remain. This report does not attempt to capture every session offered across the two days; the conference ran multiple concurrent breakout tracks, and UTRSOL representatives could only attend one session per time slot. What follows reflects the sessions UTRSOL representatives attended and documented directly, supplemented by the official conference program for sessions offered concurrently that could not be attended.

Glossary of Organizations, Roles, and Terms

The individuals and organizations below are referenced by name and acronym throughout this report without further introduction at each mention. Readers unfamiliar with Utah's anti-trafficking and victim-services landscape may wish to review this section before proceeding to the session summaries.

Organizations and Units

- AAU — Asian Association of Utah, a UTIP co-host and one of Utah's primary direct-service providers for trafficking survivors.
- ACLU of Utah — the Utah chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.
- DCFS — the Division of Child and Family Services, within Utah's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- ICAC — the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Attorney General's Office unit investigating online child exploitation.
- SANE — Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, a forensic medical role specializing in the examination of sexual assault patients.
- SECURE Strike Force — the Utah Attorney General's Office's dedicated human trafficking investigation and prosecution unit.
- UCASA — Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, a statewide victim-advocacy organization.
- UTIP — the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force, and the name of the conference itself.
- UTRSOL — Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws, the organization preparing this report.

These organizations are not uniform in size or mandate — AAU and UCASA are direct-service and advocacy nonprofits, while SECURE and ICAC are units embedded within a single state prosecutorial office.

People Referenced in This Report

The individuals below span four distinct institutional vantage points on trafficking: state prosecution, national survivor advocacy, victim services, and UTRSOL's own leadership. Several appear more than once across different sessions or days. Their titles and affiliations are current as of the conference; where a person's role changed shortly afterward (as with AAU and UCASA staff), this is noted in the relevant section rather than here.

- Derek Brown — Utah Attorney General.
- Lt. Caio Jesuino — Unit Supervisor, SECURE Strike Force.
- John Peirce — Investigator, SECURE Strike Force.
- Aubrey Lloyd — national survivor-leader; co-chair, U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.
- Cristian Eduardo — survivor-leader; member, U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.
- Trish Crump — SANE Educator, Utah.
- Crystal Vail — Administrator, Primary Prevention and Intervention, DCFS/DHHS.
- Michelle Michaels — Sexual Assault Program Supervisor, Family Crisis Center.
- Jorge Barraza — Program Manager, Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA); presenter on male sexual victimization.
- BreAnn Wilkes — Victim Assistance Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations; co-presented with Jorge Barraza.

Several of these individuals hold overlapping or adjacent roles, Lloyd and Eduardo both sit on the same federal advisory council, and Jesuino and Peirce both work within the same SECURE Strike Force but were encountered in separate sessions on different days. Where this report notes a connection between two people's statements, it is calling out an independent convergence, not evidence that the individuals coordinated with one another.

Overview: A Conference in Two Halves

The conference had a clear structural arc.

Day 1 was organized around the machinery of the state's response to trafficking: prosecution and investigation through the AG's keynote, the SECURE Strike Force breakout, the ICAC session. The through-line was "how the state builds and prosecutes cases." Aubrey Lloyd's keynote sat inside that same day but argued against its center of gravity, reframing "success" away from case-building and prosecutorial outcomes entirely, and toward whether a survivor's own pace and autonomy were respected, a standard none of the day's investigative sessions were built to measure.

Day 2 shifted to the human side and flipped the frame entirely: what happens to people once they are inside that machinery, and how systems built to help them can unintentionally fail them. AAU's opening remarks reinforced this: the organization explicitly framed its role as the victim-services core of the task force, distinct from the AG's prosecutorial role, and structured the whole second day around that framing. Eduardo's keynote and the closing plenary panel were both organized around what happens to a person once they're inside a system, how to build trust with them, how not to re-harm them, how institutions routinely get this wrong.

Read end to end, the conference in effect argued with itself. Day 1 showed how Utah builds trafficking cases; Day 2 showed, from multiple independent angles, why the people those cases are built around often experience the process itself as a source of harm. That the tension surfaced within Day 1 itself, through Lloyd's keynote, rather than waiting for Day 2 to introduce it, suggests it isn't a scheduling accident but a genuine and unresolved fault line running through how the state currently thinks about its own success.

The same pattern repeats beyond this single tension: a small number of themes recurred across nearly every session, from speakers who did not appear to be coordinating with one another. That recurrence is itself a finding: it suggests these are not isolated opinions but patterns visible across law enforcement, victim services, and lived-experience perspectives alike. Three cross-cutting patterns are traced through this document:

- (1) trafficking as trust-based exploitation rather than stranger-danger
- (2) labor and sex trafficking as frequently blend rather than cleanly separate in practice
- (3) a convergence, from both survivor-advocates and law enforcement independently, on redefining institutional success around a survivor's pace rather than case outcomes.

Day 1 Sessions — Detailed Findings

Tuesday included four sessions attended and documented by UTRSOL representatives, summarized below in the order attended. The official program offered additional concurrent sessions not reviewed in this report; see Appendix A for the complete Day 1 schedule. Each session is presented with its full content first, followed by a short note on why it matters specifically to UTRSOL's registry-classification question, so that a reader uninterested in the legislative angle can still get a complete account of what was said.

Attorney General Derek Brown — Opening Keynote

Brown opened with an extended metaphor, the Choluteca Bridge in Honduras, built to withstand hurricanes but rendered useless when the river beneath it changed course, to frame how trafficking evolves faster than institutions adapt. He flagged AI companion chatbots and social media as emerging trafficking-adjacent vectors, citing the Sewell Setzer Florida case, and noted Utah is tracking event-driven trafficking spikes (World Cup, Olympics) ahead of the state's 2034 Olympics hosting. None of this framing was abstract for long, Brown moved directly from these emerging vectors into three concrete Utah cases, using each to ground the day's broader claim that trafficking is evolving faster than the institutions built to catch it.

Case 1 — Salt City Inn (Salt Lake City, 2019–2025)

A commercial sex and drug operation run out of a motel. Owner Saysani and day manager Sayed were charged in 2020 with exploitation of prostitution, a pattern-of-unlawful-activity charge, and money laundering. Saysani pled guilty in 2023. Sayed's case dragged through repeated continuances; the state re-offered its original plea (two class A misdemeanors, no added jail time) before trial, which was rejected. The case went to a three-day jury trial in May 2026 before Judge Hildig (his first trial), with a verdict reached in roughly three and a half hours: guilty on second-degree felony money laundering and third-degree felony exploitation of prostitution. Brown used this case to argue that defendants who stall through delay are betting against the state, and that the AG's Office culture favors patient, disciplined prosecution over early leniency.

Case 2 — Midway West Amusements

Twenty Mexican nationals on H-2B visas, working for a traveling carnival company, had their passports and visa documents confiscated. The case broke open when two workers escaped to the Mexican consulate. Charges included three counts of second-degree felony human trafficking and nine counts of third-degree felony possession of another's identity documents (one count per victim). The owner ultimately pled guilty to a pattern-of-unlawful-activity charge tied to benefiting from human trafficking. The Asian Association of Utah (AAU) was explicitly credited by Brown as a case-breaking partner alongside the Mexican consulate — a direct, on-record confirmation that AAU carries genuine institutional standing with the AG's Office, not merely a service-delivery role.

Case 3 — Mill Creek (Portillo/Gallardo)

A family-trust-based debt bondage case in Mill Creek, roughly ten minutes from the Capitol, a proximity Brown emphasized deliberately to argue trafficking is not a distant or foreign phenomenon. Two women from Guatemala, one the defendant's own niece, were brought in under an initial \$16,000 smuggling debt that escalated to \$20,000 once the victim arrived, an illustration of debt bondage's defining mechanic, where the debt is never fixed but whatever amount keeps the person working. The victims worked off the books at fast food restaurants the couple managed, with no control over pay, no phones, and cash cards controlled by the traffickers. Coercion escalated to a threat against a victim's child; investigators later found sexual exploitation as well, and charges were amended to add rape on top of the human trafficking charges. Brown used this case as his central illustration that labor and sex trafficking are not clean, separable categories in practice, and that trust-based exploitation, not stranger abduction, is the norm.

Across all three cases, Brown's rhetorical throughline was persistence: Salt City Inn rewarded patient prosecution over a plea shortcut, Midway West rewarded sustained partnership with a community organization, and Mill Creek showed the payoff of not stopping at the first applicable label, investigators who kept digging past the initial labor-exploitation framing uncovered sexual exploitation as well, resulting in charges that better reflected the full scope of harm to the victims. None of the three cases addressed what happens to a defendant after conviction.

Registry Adjacent

Under Utah's Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry, section §53-29-202 registrable offenses make conviction for the following subject to the public facing registry:

- (xl) Human trafficking for labor — §76-5-308
- (xli) Human trafficking of a child for labor — §76-5-308.5
- (xlii) Aggravated human trafficking for labor — §76-5-310
- (xliii) Human trafficking of a vulnerable adult for labor — §76-5-311
- (xliv) Human smuggling — §76-5-316
- (xlv) Aggravated human smuggling — §76-5-317

This registry is commonly understood to be Utah's sex offender registry, though none of the labor trafficking offenses above carry any corresponding sex element, they register the offender under the registry's separate "kidnap offender" category (§53-29-202(2)(c)), a different statutory door into the same registration requirement, not a lesser or separate one. This distinction is easy to lose given how casually "the registry" gets shorthanded to "sex offender registry" in public conversation, including by law enforcement officials themselves. No mention of the registry, registrant reentry, or labor-trafficking-registry policy questions were presented anywhere in the AG's speech. The framing of "success" here is entirely prosecutorial, build the case, get the conviction, with no acknowledgment of what happens

to defendants afterward. The open question we were left sitting with isn't whether Utah's statute captures labor trafficking (it does, categorically, as a kidnap offense), but whether "kidnap offender" is any better a conceptual fit for labor exploitation than "sex offender" would have been. Two narrower, case-specific gaps remain as well: whether Jordan Jensen's conviction in the Midway West Amusements case was actually charged under one of the six statutes above, and whether the Midway West Amusements case resulted in a registrable conviction at all, neither has been confirmed against an actual court record.

Aubrey Lloyd — Keynote, "Beyond Buzzwords: Rethinking Success & Support"

Lloyd is a nationally credentialed survivor-leader (MSW, LSW), co-chair of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and oversees DOJ-funded training and technical assistance for anti-trafficking service providers nationwide. Her keynote was structured around a critique of the anti-trafficking field's tendency to treat terms like "success," "survivor-led," and "trauma-informed" as buzzwords rather than practiced values. This put her directly at odds with the framing Attorney General Brown had established just before her, where success meant a conviction that stuck, Lloyd argued success should be measured by whether a survivor's own pace and autonomy were respected, a standard his three cases never touched. She did not name him or his keynote directly, but the contrast was hard to miss for anyone who had sat through both.

Core frameworks presented

- The carrot metaphor: when a client disengages, providers instinctively blame the client rather than examining the environment or fit, the way no one would blame a carrot for failing to grow instead of checking the soil. Lloyd used this to argue that 'non-compliant' or 'resistant' client labels often say more about a program's rigidity than about the person being served.
- The upside-down painting: a Mondrian hung incorrectly for 75 years, now unfixable without destroying it — used to argue that once a program imposes the wrong framework on a person for long enough, the damage becomes difficult to reverse.
- The pacer-runner analogy: a blind Paralympic sprinter tethered to a sighted guide who matches his exact speed — her central reframe of institutional "success" as keeping pace with the client, not winning or closing a case.
- Her own cancer diagnosis: she described her oncology team permitting her anger and honesty about how difficult treatment felt, and argued anti-trafficking programs rarely extend survivors the same permission to voice how hard the process of receiving services actually is.
- A live "root cause" reframing exercise: she asked the room what happens if "trauma-informed care" itself, rather than trafficking, is treated as the root problem — arguing that because funders and systems are built around volume (case counts, clients served), quality is sacrificed for throughput, and "trauma-informed" becomes a label applied to volume-driven programs rather than a genuine practice.

Lloyd's critique of institutions that substitute compliance metrics (screening checklists, sobriety requirements, "closed case" statistics) for actually listening to the person in front of them is structurally the same critique UTRSOL makes about registry policy, that a system built for administrative/legal tidiness (categorical registration requirements) overrides individualized, evidence-based assessment of actual risk or need.

Extended Examples

Lloyd described a case manager who placed a survivor on a 72-hour mental health hold after the survivor expressed a desire to start an OnlyFans account, using this as her central example of paternalistic overreach, arguing the provider's discomfort with the survivor's autonomy, particularly sexual autonomy, was mistaken for a mental health crisis. She also criticized programs that terminate services after a relapse, and described a therapist who worked with her purely on the capacity to remain physically present for a few seconds at a time without dissociating, reframing that as genuine progress rather than deficiency.

Two anecdotes from her personal experience illustrated gaps between institutional gestures and material need: having nowhere to go for holidays as a teenager when her trafficker offered the stability a service system did not; and receiving a handmade quilt as a gesture of care while she had no fixed place to live, which became one more thing to carry with her and no place to put it in rather than genuine help.

She also described learning that another state Attorney General's Office had referenced her case publicly, including case details from a newspaper account, without proactively informing her in advance, a distinct caution about institutional use of survivor stories, even when the underlying facts are technically public record.

Lived-Experience as an Advocate

One example Lloyd highlighted in a slide during her presentation was A 2016 Indianapolis news article (FOX59/CBS4, Russ McQuaid, "Human trafficking victim calls for treatment, not jail," Jan. 17, 2016) which confirmed that Lloyd's "treatment, not jail" position predates her national profile by nearly a decade. This is a documented, decade-long track record rather than a recent talking point, and a useful citation for arguments concerning lived-experience representation on bodies such as Utah's Sentencing Commission.

Lloyd's keynote is a clear illustration of exactly why a lived-experience victim seat matters on bodies like these: her critique of institutions that substitute compliance metrics for genuinely listening to the person in front of them is precisely the failure mode a dedicated lived-experience seat is meant to guard against. That seat existed on the Sentencing Commission for at least sixteen years before S.B. 200 eliminated it in 2024, and has never existed at all on the Victim Services Commission, leaving both bodies currently without the one voice best positioned to catch that failure mode from the inside, before it hardens into standard institutional practice.

4.3 SECURE Strike Force Breakout

Case Review: Understanding Investigations, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Lt. Caio Jesuino is Unit Supervisor of the Utah Attorney General's Office SECURE Strike Force. The unit is staffed with five to six full-time investigators (supplemented by loaned local-PD investigators), three dedicated trafficking prosecutors, one legal assistant, one analyst, and victim advocates.

Investigative framework

Only two legal categories exist, sex trafficking and labor trafficking, each requiring both a victim and a trafficker; independent sex work or a simple wage dispute does not meet the definition absent a trafficker element. The legal test across both categories is force, fraud, or coercion. Jesuino described the central operational bottleneck as needing an identifiable, cooperating victim: cases are frequently dropped when a cooperating victim disappears, even with substantial corroborating evidence, which he characterized as a statutory weakness rather than merely a practical one. He also noted a deliberate practice of referring minor-victim cases to federal prosecution given dramatically higher sentencing exposure (roughly one year at the state level versus fifteen to twenty years at the federal level).

The “Rex” Case

This was a multi-state case based in Texas involving a trafficker who targeted undocumented families (leveraging deportation threats) and children without a father figure, used threats around a victim's sexuality (weaponizing anti-gay stigma within the victim's own family or community to prevent disclosure), used Santa Muerte iconography for intimidation, and combined narcotics distribution with sex and labor trafficking. The case was ultimately made through a narcotics search warrant when the trafficking elements alone were not provable. The defendant was convicted, incarcerated, and later died by suicide in custody.

The Midway West cross-reference

Jesuino separately described the Midway West Amusements case referenced in AG Brown's keynote — a traveling carnival company (“NWA,” Arizona-based) that recruited Mexican workers under H-2A/H-2B-type arrangements, confiscated passports, and threatened deportation and negative “reviews” that would prevent workers from returning the following season. His account of the breakthrough mechanism was more detailed than Brown's: Jesuino describes a deliberate undercover operation in which two victims wore hidden micro-cameras and asked the trafficker to return their passports, with the refusal captured on camera providing probable cause for a search warrant. Jesuino also noted the search warrant recovered passports for only about four of roughly twenty workers, because a victim had confided in a friend and girlfriend about the planned raid, tipping off the trafficker beforehand — an operational lesson he framed around the need to compartmentalize information even from cooperating victims.

A legislative ask from the unit

Jesuino stated that he has sought legislative support, without success over the past two to three years, for a prosecutorial tool that would allow trafficking cases to proceed without a cooperating, testifying victim, relying instead on corroborating evidence such as pay records, contract fraud documentation, and documented threats. The “legislative ask” that Jesuino is likely referencing is H.B. 200 which was introduced during the 2026 general session, since this is UTRSOL’s first documented encounter with this specific mechanism. The bill’s provision “authorizing the Attorney General to sue to stop or prevent human trafficking offenses” is a civil enforcement mechanism, which would let the AG’s office act without needing a criminal conviction (and, by extension, without needing a cooperating, testifying victim to sustain a criminal case).

While the bill did not make it into legislative committee deliberations, effectively stalling its advancement, it did come up in discussions within the Victim Services Commission. The SECURE Strike Force may bring back a similar mechanism in 2027. UTRSOL communicated its opposition directly to the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Trevor Lee, opposing the bill over concerns about the broad authority it granted the Attorney General’s office to act on standards lower than probable cause and on predictions rather than confirmed conduct, a position Lee addressed directly in his reply, defending the registry’s inclusion of labor trafficking and human smuggling offenses on the grounds that such conduct can overlap with or lead to sexual harms.

Taken as a whole, this session gave UTRSOL its most operationally detailed look at how the state actually builds a trafficking case. It also gave UTRSOL a rare, direct line of sight into how the same underlying policy questions, how much evidentiary weight the state should be allowed to substitute for a cooperating victim, and how registry classification treats non-sexual trafficking conduct, surfaces independently across three different venues: a state investigator’s own stated frustration, a failed bill’s committee history, and a sponsoring legislator’s direct written defense of the registry’s current scope. That convergence, more than any single data point, is what makes this session worth returning to once H.B. 200’s successor, if one comes, is introduced in 2027.

ICAC Task Force Breakout

Sexual Predators: Grooming, AI & Sextortion

Presented by Michelle Busch-Upwall (ICAC Training Coordinator), Kimberly Burton (Special Agent, AG’s Office). The unit maintains four prosecutors dedicated solely to ICAC cases, a separate track from the SECURE Strike Force’s three trafficking prosecutors. The unit’s caseload draws primarily from cyber tips generated through NCMEC after platforms detect and report suspected child sexual abuse material, which investigators then corroborate through search warrants for IP addresses and account records. That volume of externally generated leads shapes much of how ICAC’s work differs structurally from the SECURE Strike Force’s more victim-and-informant-driven trafficking cases.

Key non-graphic findings

- Offender profile is deliberately de-stereotyped: presenters emphasized offenders include attorneys, police officers, teachers, coaches, and pastors, framing the pattern as trust-based rather than stranger-danger, consistent with the theme running through AG Brown's and Lt. Jesuino's sessions.
- Platform-specific risk was discussed across gaming platforms, Snapchat, Instagram, Kik, and anonymous chat apps, with Roblox specifically flagged despite its perception as a safe platform; presenters noted Utah is pursuing action against Roblox directly.
- A distinct transnational sextortion pattern was described: organized extortion operations, presented as based substantially in Nigeria and operating "like a call center," targeting teenagers (disproportionately boys, due to shame-driven compliance with payment demands) and linked directly to multiple Utah teen suicides.
- Presenters stated that ICAC investigations "cross over" into human trafficking cases with some regularity, a second independent confirmation, alongside Eduardo's keynote the following day, that these offense categories blend more than statutory lines suggest.
- Cyber tips originate from NCMEC after platform-level detection; investigators then pursue search warrants for IP addresses and account records, often cross-referenced against victims' or offenders' own public social media activity.

The West Haven Case

This session included unblurred arrest footage and family photography (from the defendant's public Facebook profile) connected to a 2025 West Haven, UT CSAM case, showing the initial knock at the door and the defendant's wife and children being brought outside. Investigators traced him through a search warrant on an IP address tied to the material shared on Kik, then used open-source social media research, including photos parents themselves had posted publicly, to confirm his identity and household. The presenting agent described this as a routine but lengthy process.

Once identified, a multi-officer search warrant was executed at his home to recover devices before evidence could be destroyed. He was ultimately charged with sending and receiving CSAM and pled guilty. The case stayed in Utah state court rather than being referred federally, notably, the presenting agent said she "wishes we could take all our cases federal" given tougher federal sentencing minimums, but that federal referral is typically reserved for repeat offenders or cases spanning multiple states. The outcome here was probation and some jail time, not a prison sentence, with registration as a result.

This session is the least directly relevant to UTRSOL's registry-classification question of any Day 1 session, since ICAC's caseload is overwhelmingly child-exploitation material rather than labor or adult sex trafficking. Its value to this report is contextual: it rounds out the picture of the broader offender-management ecosystem UTRSOL operates adjacent to. It also offers a useful, non-graphic illustration of how state and federal charging decisions diverge in practice.

Statutory Research: Utah's Registry Structure

Utah Code §53-29-202 establishes the registry formally as the Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry, sorting registrants into three distinct categories: sex offender (subsection 2(b)), kidnap offender (subsection 2(c)), and child abuse offender (subsection 2(a)). Which category a person falls into is determined entirely by the specific statute of conviction, not by any judicial or administrative assessment of individualized risk or the actual conduct involved.

As outlined earlier, six labor-trafficking and human-smuggling offenses fall under the kidnap offender category rather than the sex offender category. A person convicted of labor trafficking can accurately be told they are 'not on the sex offender registry,' yet they remain fully subject to registration under Utah's unified Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry, the same public database, the same community notification requirements, and the same residency and employment restrictions as any other registrant. The label differs; the registration obligation, and its practical consequences, do not. In practice, a labor trafficker and a sex offender face identical residency restrictions, identical employer-facing background checks, and identical inclusion in the public registry search tool most Utahns associate with sexual predation. The 'kidnap offender' label does nothing to correct that misassociation — it only changes which subsection a person is found under, not how a landlord, employer, or neighbor perceives them.

Whether “kidnap offender” is a conceptually appropriate category for labor exploitation conduct, or whether it fails to fit the actual conduct in the same way “sex offender” would, is a question UTRSOL seeks to raise as part of the 2026 Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (LECJ) Interim Committee’s study item on Registrable Offenses, officially described as an examination of “what should qualify as a registrable offense in Utah.” The item, sponsored under co-chairs Sen. Calvin R. Musselman and Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox, is broad enough to encompass this question but does not name it specifically.

UTRSOL submitted its own analysis, “The Registry’s Reach: Purpose, Composition, and the Case for Systematic Review,” under Publication 2026-38 to LECJ Interim Committee earlier this month. Using Utah’s own registry, court-conviction, and incident data, the analysis argues that eight registrable-offense categories, including but not limited to the six labor-trafficking and human-smuggling offenses previously discussed, fail the registry’s own stated purposes: deterrence, community notification, and law enforcement monitoring, because they were added to the registry without ever being evaluated for actuarial validity, treatment applicability, or purpose alignment. It asks the Interim Committee to review those categories and determine, among statutes, whether Utah’s labor trafficking classification carries assumptions and collateral consequences designed for abduction-type conduct that do not transfer cleanly to labor exploitation, and whether a labor-trafficking-specific classification or exemption structure would better match the underlying conduct.

Day 2 Sessions — Detailed Findings

The second day of the conference shifted from the investigative and prosecutorial focus of the first day toward survivor experience and service delivery, beginning with a data-heavy session immediately preceding Cristian Eduardo’s keynote. That shift in focus was reinforced by who was chosen to speak: where Day 1’s most prominent voices came from the Attorney General’s Office, Day 2 opened with a data presentation and a lived-experience keynote before any law enforcement representative took the stage again.

Cristian Eduardo — Keynote

More Than a Headline: Exploring the Realities of Labor Trafficking

Cristian Eduardo is a member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (the same federal body Aubrey Lloyd sits on), co-chair of the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, a board member of the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking, a former mechanical engineer, and a queer Mexican immigrant, trafficking survivor, and person living with HIV.

Statistical framing

Eduardo cited labor trafficking as accounting for roughly 19–22% of reported human trafficking incidents in the United States, while forced labor makes up 77% of trafficking victims globally, a sharper, U.S.-specific complement to the ILO global figures presented the day before. He attributed the domestic underreporting gap to the absence of a “rescue narrative” comparable to sex trafficking, the greater evidentiary difficulty of proving force/fraud/coercion in labor contexts, and reluctance among child- and family-serving organizations to engage with cases implicating a child’s own family as trafficker.

Lived-Experience as an Advocate

Eduardo described being recruited from Mexico into debt-bondage labor trafficking in Canada, an escalating, never-resolving debt for transport and job placement, and pressure toward commercial sex work that intensified specifically because of his resistance to it, illustrating labor and sexual exploitation functioning as a single, continuous mechanism rather than separate categories. He later described a second trafficking situation in a New York nightclub setting, involving physical violence, which he left after concluding his life was at risk.

He described an extended, difficult period accessing shelter and support afterward, including being turned away by multiple organizations for being male, being over 21, or not having “suffered enough” to qualify for services, a first-person account of the same institutional gatekeeping Lloyd critiqued abstractly the day before. He explicitly cross-referenced Lloyd’s talk by name in his own remarks. That cross-reference turned Lloyd’s critique from a single speaker’s abstract framework into something closer to a documented pattern, two survivor-leaders, speaking a day apart without apparent coordination, independently describing the same institutional failure from two different sides of it.

Labor Trafficking Data

Part of Eduardo's presentation contained slides on national and international data, functioning as a lead-in to his keynote remarks. The slides drew on both international and domestic sources, moving from global forced-labor prevalence data down to Utah-specific caseload and prosecution figures. That progression, global, to national, to state-level, was deliberate: it let Eduardo situate Utah's own near-empty labor trafficking prosecution record against a much larger backdrop before making the case that the state's response is out of step with the scale of the problem.

Global and National Data Presented

- ILO/Walk Free/IOM (Geneva, 2022): 27.6 million people globally in forced labor; 57% male, 43% female; by type, 63% non-state-imposed forced labor, 23% forced sexual exploitation, 14% state-imposed forced labor.
- National Institute of Justice: 71% of individuals experiencing forced labor in the United States entered the country on lawful H-2A or H-2B visas, countering the misconception that most forced labor victims are undocumented.
- A November 2021 South Georgia case: 26 farmworkers rescued, all Latin American migrants who had entered the country on legal visas (DHS).
- Domestic labor trafficking by sector (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2024): domestic work 20%, restaurant/food service 9%, construction 8%, agriculture 6%, illicit activities 5%, other (retail, hospitality, housekeeping) 52% — confirming labor trafficking is concentrated well outside agriculture.
- Labor trafficking venues, national count data: domestic work (482 cases) far outpaces every other venue, followed by restaurant/food service (219), construction (180), agriculture/farms (155), and illicit activity (112), with a large "other" category (744).

Utah-specific data

- Federal Human Trafficking Report (2021): new criminal human trafficking cases and defendants in Utah from 2017–2021 are almost entirely sex trafficking; forced labor shows no visible bar in any year. Read alongside Jesuino's account of the evidentiary difficulty of labor trafficking cases, this indicates Utah's labor trafficking prosecution record is close to empty, not merely underreported.
- AAU 2023 human trafficking client statistics: 245 survivors served; 62% female-identifying, 38% male-identifying; 83% adult, 17% youth; 52% Latino, 32% White, 11% Asian; 68% from communities of color; 39% U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, 61% foreign nationals from 18 different countries; sex trafficking 46%, labor trafficking 46%, both 8% — directly confirming the claim UTRSOL had already made to AAU staff in its introductory outreach emails before this data was in hand.

The ILO global figures (63% non-state forced labor, 57% male) are directionally useful framing but are a global prevalence estimate, not Utah-specific caseload data or direct evidence about the composition of Utah's registrant population.

The Zero-Prosecutions Finding

Eduardo stated he personally researched labor trafficking prosecutions in Utah and found none, noting he could only locate federal-level data and flagging the near-total absence of state-level prosecution tracking as its own policy gap. This independently corroborates the federal report chart from the previous day's data session, Utah's labor trafficking prosecution record is, on two separate lines of inquiry, essentially empty. He was explicit that this does not mean an absence of victims, citing AAU's own client numbers as evidence the underlying problem exists regardless of prosecution rates.

Taken together, the data in this session functions less as a complete picture of Utah's labor trafficking population and more as a demonstration of how thin that picture currently is: national and global figures are abundant, while Utah-specific figures are limited to AAU's own client intake and a near-empty federal prosecution chart. That imbalance is itself a policy-relevant finding: a state cannot calibrate a registry classification, a prosecution strategy, or a service-funding model to a population it has never adequately measured.

Additional substantive material

Beyond the biographical narrative and the prosecution-record findings, Eduardo's remarks covered several more technical points that speak directly to how trafficking is defined, recruited into, and remedied under federal law. These are summarized below as a set of discrete, citable facts rather than as part of his personal account, since each stands on its own independent of the narrative surrounding it.

- He explained the statutory "action, means, and purpose" framework underlying trafficking and T-visa determinations, and noted "something of value" in exchange for exploitation extends well beyond money, housing, medication, belonging, even a video game gift card.
- His own recruitment occurred through a staff member at his U.S. college campus who identified him as being in debt and offered a job opportunity abroad, a domestic recruitment vector distinct from the border-crossing or visa-worker patterns described in the Midway West and Mill Creek cases.
- He described current work protecting trafficking survivors from consequences when they are forced into criminal activity by their traffickers ("forced criminality") — a related but analytically distinct population from labor traffickers themselves convicted of trafficking offenses.
- On the T-visa process specifically: roughly a 36-month wait for a decision, no guaranteed work authorization during that period, a burdensome trauma-affected affidavit process requiring exact dates and locations of exploitation, and a resulting employment and credit gap he frames as itself a high-risk period for re-trafficking.
- A practical outreach point: he argued that placing trafficking-awareness resources only in police stations or established service agencies misses survivors who do not feel safe engaging those systems, citing a Boston example where placing materials in libraries

and retail stores instead led previously unreachable survivors to come forward years later, directly relevant to UTRSOL/AfterMath Alliance's own outreach and host-site placement strategy.

- He closed with an explicit call to action: to contact senators, congresspeople, and city council members about labor trafficking specifically, naming Salt Lake City by name, the closest thing to an outside, on-record endorsement of legislative engagement gathered anywhere in the conference.

Eduardo's keynote independently corroborates the near-empty Utah prosecution record, supplies a sharper U.S.-specific statistic than the ILO data, offers a first-person account of the blended labor/sex trafficking pattern seen elsewhere in the conference, and closes with the only explicit call to legislative action directed at Salt Lake City specifically.

Closing Plenary Panel

Building Trust and Rapport with Survivors: A Multidisciplinary Approach

The conference closed not with a keynote but with a working panel, bringing together four practitioners from different corners of the response system to discuss what actually builds trust with a survivor in the room. Unlike the two keynotes, none of these panelists had a lived-experience framing of their own to draw on, their perspective was institutional and practitioner-facing throughout, which makes the areas where they nonetheless converged with Lloyd's and Eduardo's critiques more notable, not less.

Seated at the table were panelists: Trish Crump (SANE Educator, Utah), Crystal Vail (Administrator, Primary Prevention and Intervention, Department of Child and Family Services / DHHS), John Peirce (SECURE Strike Force, Utah AG's Office), and Michelle Michaels (Sexual Assault Program Supervisor, Family Crisis Center, YCC).

Key contributions

- Peirce independently echoed Lloyd's "pace, not the win" framework from a law-enforcement perspective, arguing success should be measured in micro-steps, a victim simply showing up for an interview, or leaving the door open to return months later, rather than case outcomes. This is now the second law-enforcement-adjacent voice (alongside elements of Jesuino's rapport-building comments) independently arriving at a framework Lloyd introduced from the survivor-advocacy side.
- Vail described a 16-year-old in foster care with multiple abusers, including a trafficker boyfriend, whose six-professional child-and-family team meeting was believed to have gone well until a colleague's blunt intervention, "what does she want?" revealed the girl had dissociated for roughly 45 minutes the moment her trafficker's name came up, unnoticed by anyone in the room. The team's fix, a physical signal to stop the meeting, and letting the girl, at 16, run her own subsequent meetings, reportedly changed the case's entire trajectory. This is a strong, non-graphic illustration of over-

professionalized institutional process working against the person it is meant to serve.

- Crump stated plainly that trafficking victims frequently access medical care during their trafficking, and that medical professionals “are missing it,” an admission of a systemic screening gap in a discipline not otherwise represented in the conference material, tangential to UTRSOL’s core focus but worth noting if healthcare-based identification ever becomes relevant to future advocacy.

This panel closed the conference on a practitioner-to-practitioner note rather than a policy note, and none of the four panelists addressed registry classification, labor trafficking, or legislative reform directly. Its value to UTRSOL is the Peirce and Vail material described above, both of which reinforce themes established earlier in the conference rather than introducing new ones.

Cross-Conference Synthesis

The four patterns below are not independently invented by this report; each is a synthesis of statements made by at least two speakers, in most cases from different professional backgrounds, who did not appear to be responding to one another. That independence is what gives these patterns their weight: a single advocate’s framework is one perspective to weigh, but the same observation arrived at separately by a prosecutor, a survivor-leader, and a case worker is closer to a finding than an opinion.

Trust-based exploitation, not stranger danger

This theme recurs independently across at least four sources: AG Brown’s Mill Creek case (family-trust-based debt bondage), Lloyd’s personal account (her trafficker offering the stability her home life lacked), the ICAC session’s de-stereotyping of offenders as attorneys, coaches, and teachers, and Eduardo’s own recruitment through a trusted campus staff member. Four independent sources converging on the same pattern is a stronger evidentiary basis for arguing against stranger-danger-modeled registry restrictions (such as residency or proximity restrictions) than any single account alone.

The practical implication for UTRSOL is that arguments against categorical registry restrictions do not need to rest on sympathy for any individual case; they can rest on the state’s own repeated, independent acknowledgment that trust-based exploitation, not stranger danger, is the dominant pattern law enforcement itself encounters.

Labor and sex trafficking as a blended, not clean, distinction

Brown’s Mill Creek case (labor exploitation that became sexual exploitation), Lt. Jesuino’s investigative experience, and Eduardo’s own account (labor exploitation intensifying specifically because of his resistance to sexual exploitation) all independently describe the same pattern. Any legislative fix to the registry’s treatment of labor trafficking needs to account for genuinely blended cases, not only “pure” labor trafficking cases like Jordan Jensen’s with no sexual component.

This has a direct drafting implication: any legislative language addressing labor trafficking's registry classification will need to define clearly what counts as a "pure" labor trafficking conviction versus one that also involves an adjudicated sexual offense, since a bill that fails to draw this line precisely will likely be read by opponents as an attempt to extend leniency to sex convictions under a labor trafficking label.

Redefining institutional success

Lloyd's survivor-advocacy critique of success-as-case-closure is independently echoed by John Peirce from a law-enforcement perspective on the closing panel. An idea validated from both the survivor-advocacy side and the investigative side is considerably more persuasive, in a legislative or stakeholder context, than either position alone. This convergence is worth citing by name as a documented instance of a Utah state sitting AG's Office investigator and a national survivor-leader independently reaching the same conclusion from opposite ends of the system.

The near-empty labor trafficking prosecution record

Confirmed on three separate, independent lines of inquiry, the federal report chart shown in the labor trafficking data session, Eduardo's own independent research, and the general absence of state-level prosecution tracking flagged by both. This reframes UTRSOL's legislative task: not correcting a frequently-applied, actively harmful policy, but of a rarely-triggered statutory provision before it is applied inconsistently as labor trafficking prosecutions increase.

Taken together, these four patterns describe a system whose investigative and prosecutorial machinery has grown considerably more sophisticated than its capacity to reckon with what happens to people once that machinery has run its course. None of the speakers who supplied these patterns were arguing for the same policy outcome, or even aware they were contributing to the same argument, which is precisely why their convergence is more useful than a single aligned advocate would be. The remainder of this report turns from what the conference revealed in aggregate to what it meant for UTRSOL specifically, beginning with the personal toll this work exacted on the organization.

A Note on the Personal Dimension of This Work

This section is not written as a digression from the policy analysis but because it is part of what this conference actually involved: two days spent gathering evidence for a legislative argument while sitting inside the exact case-study material UTRSOL is working to change. That dual position, researcher and subject at once, is not a conflict to disclose and set aside, but a vantage point this report treats as part of the evidence itself.

UTRSOL chose to attend and engage with this material on the view that understanding the system as it actually operates, including the parts of it that are uncomfortable to sit with, is a precondition both for reckoning honestly, as an organization, with the harm its work

exists to address, and for changing that system in a way that is meaningful and credible, rather than a cost that can be avoided by staying at a distance. That reckoning is not incidental to the organization's credibility on this issue; it is arguably the foundation of it, since an organization advocating for a more honest accounting of harm and risk cannot ask that of the state while declining to hold itself to the same standard.

Appendix A: Conference Program Reference

The following is drawn directly from the official printed conference program booklet and is presented as the authoritative schedule for both days.

Sessions not directly attended by UTRSOL representatives are included here for completeness and to give a reader unfamiliar with the conference a full sense of its scope; only the sessions summarized reflect direct UTRSOL review.

Conference Logistics

- Dates: August 25–26, 2026.
- Location: Utah State Capitol, North Building, Salt Lake City.
- Sponsored by: Office of the Attorney General, State of Utah; Utah Trafficking in Persons (UTIP) Task Force; Human Trafficking Support, Asian Association of Utah.

The conference's location on Utah Capitol grounds, and its co-sponsorship by the Attorney General's Office itself, meant UTRSOL representatives were attending as guests within a space closely associated with the state's prosecutorial apparatus, a dynamic worth keeping in mind when interpreting the tone and content of individual sessions.

Day 1 — August 25, 2026

- 8:00–8:45 AM — Registration.
- 9:00–9:30 AM — Opening Remarks: Derek Brown, Utah Attorney General.
- 9:30–11:00 AM — Keynote: "Beyond Buzzwords: Rethinking Success and Support" — Aubrey Lloyd, MSW, LSW.
- 11:00–11:30 AM — Break: Resources & Networking (East Senate Building, Beehive Room); Micro Breakout Session, "Misconception, Sensationalism, and Realities of Human Trafficking" (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 11:30 AM–12:45 PM — Breakout: "Human Trafficking 101" — Kate LePray (Education & Outreach Coordinator, AAU) and MK Galli (Youth Outreach & Mentor Specialist, AAU) (North Capitol Building, South Conference Center).
- 11:30 AM–12:45 PM — Breakout: "Beyond Exploitation: Practical Victim's Rights for Human Trafficking Survivors in Utah" — Heidi Nestel (Executive Director and Staff Attorney, Utah Crime Victims Legal Clinic) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).

- 11:30 AM–12:45 PM — Breakout: "Trauma Informed Response 101" — Vickie Bushman (Training and Outreach Program Manager, Utah Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Criminal Justice) (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 11:30 AM–12:45 PM — Breakout: "Making Data Matter: Using Data to Strengthen Human Trafficking Investigations" — Kathy Myhre (Criminal Analyst, Utah Attorney General's Office) (East Senate Building, Olmstead Room).
- 12:45–1:45 PM — Lunch (on your own).
- 1:45–3:00 PM — Breakout: "Numb: Feeling Again in a Disconnected World" — Chris Yadon (Strategic Advisor & Executive Director, Saprea) (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 1:45–3:00 PM — Breakout: "Trauma-Informed Intake and Screening: Best Practices for Supporting Trafficking Survivors" — Konstance Merideth (Co-Executive Director, Short Creek Dream Center) (East Senate Building, Olmstead Room).
- 1:45–3:00 PM — Breakout: "Hidden in Plain Sight: Uncovering the Realities of Male Sexual Victimization" — Jorge Barraza (Program Manager, UCASA) and BreAnn Wilkes (Victim Assistance Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations) (North Capitol Building, South Conference Center).
- 3:00–3:15 PM — Break.
- 3:15–4:30 PM — Breakout: "When Helpers Need Help" — Vickie Bushman and Beatriz Herrera (Training and Training Specialist, Utah Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Criminal Justice) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).
- 3:15–4:30 PM — Breakout: "Case Review: Understanding Investigations, Challenges and Lessons Learned" — Lt. Caio Jesuino (Unit Supervisor, SECURE Strike Force, Utah Attorney General's Office) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).
- 3:15–4:30 PM — Breakout: "Applying Risk, Need, and Responsivity: Improving Service Planning in Human Trafficking Cases Involving Substance Use" — Troy Bennett (Program Outcomes and Impact Manager, Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness / USARA) (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 3:15–4:30 PM — Breakout: "Sexual Predators: Grooming, AI & Sextortion" — Michelle Busch-Upwall (Training Coordinator), Kimberly Burton (Special Agent), and "K9 Flash" (Special Agent), Utah Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, Utah Attorney General's Office (North Capitol Building, South Conference Center).
- 3:15–4:30 PM — Breakout: "Where Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Intersect with Human Trafficking: Understanding Power, Control and Coercion" — Heidi Patterson (Training Coordinator, Utah Domestic Violence Coalition) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).

Of the fourteen Day 1 sessions and breaks listed above, UTRSOL representatives directly attended and documented five: the opening keynote, the Lloyd keynote, the Jesuino breakout, the ICAC breakout, and the session presented by Jorge Barraza, though a review of that specific session was not available for this report.

Day 2 — August 26, 2026

- 9:10–10:40 AM — Keynote: "More Than a Headline: Exploring the Realities of Labor Trafficking" — Cristian Eduardo, Lived Experience Expert.
- 11:00–11:30 AM — Break: Resources & Networking (East Senate Building, Beehive Room); "Would You Recognize Human Trafficking?" (East Senate, Kletting Room).
- 11:10 AM–12:25 PM — Breakout: "Open Source Intelligence: Human Trafficking Investigations" — Mary Kent (Director, Utah Valley University Open Source Intelligence Center) (North Capitol Building, South Conference Center).
- 11:10 AM–12:25 PM — Breakout: "Best Practices When Working with Survivors with Disabilities: Trauma-Informed, and Survivor-Centered Responses" — Marilyn Hammond, PhD, and Bora Lee, EdD (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 11:10 AM–12:25 PM — Breakout: "Case Review: Understanding Investigations, Challenges and Lessons Learned" — Lt. Caio Jesuino (Unit Supervisor, SECURE Strike Force, Utah Attorney General's Office) (East Senate Building, Olmstead Room).
- 11:10 AM–12:25 PM — Breakout: "Applying Risk, Need, and Responsivity: Improving Service Planning in Human Trafficking Cases Involving Substance Use" — Troy Bennett (USARA) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).
- 1:25–2:40 PM — Breakout: "Trauma Informed Response 101" — Vickie Bushman (North Capitol Building, South Conference Center).
- 1:25–2:40 PM — Breakout: "Sexual Predators: Grooming, AI & Sextortion" — Michelle Busch-Upwall, Kimberly Burton, and "K9 Flash" (ICAC Task Force) (North Capitol Building, North Conference Center).
- 1:25–2:40 PM — Breakout: "Youth Safety and Provider Compliance: Licensing, Reporting and Background Checks Made Simple" — Jenilee Davidson (Licensing Manager, Division of Licensing and Background Checks, DHHS) and Daphne Lynch (Office of Background Processing Director, Division of Licensing and Background Checks, DHHS) (East Senate Building, Olmstead Room).
- 1:25–2:40 PM — Breakout: "Where Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Intersect with Human Trafficking: Understanding Power, Control and Coercion" — Heidi Patterson (Utah Domestic Violence Coalition) (East Senate Building, Kletting Room).
- 3:10–4:25 PM — Plenary Panel: "Building Trust and Rapport with Survivors: A Multidisciplinary Approach" — Trish Crump (SANE Educator, Utah), Crystal Vail (Administrator, Primary Prevention and Intervention, DCFS/DHHS), John Peirce (SECURE Strike Force, Utah AG's Office), Michelle Michaels (Sexual Assault Program Supervisor, Family Crisis Center, YCC).

Of the eleven Day 2 sessions and breaks listed above, UTRSOL representatives directly attended and documented three: the labor trafficking data session and Eduardo keynote, the second Jesuino breakout (not separately reviewed, given substantial overlap with the Day 1 session), and the closing plenary panel.

