

Number 2026-46



**Utah Sentencing Commission
Member Profiles**

September 2026

Office of
UTAH FOR RATIONAL SEX OFFENSE LAWS

Index Utah Code

Title 75E Criminal and Juvenile Justice Administration

Chapter 4 Sentencing Commission

Part 1 General Provisions

Section 102 Creation -- Membership -- Terms -- Vacancies -- Expenses.

Effective 7/1/2026

75E-4-102. Creation -- Members -- Appointment -- Qualifications.

- (1) There is created the sentencing commission within the department.
- (2) The sentencing commission shall:
 - (a) develop bylaws and rules in compliance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act; and
 - (b) elect the sentencing commission's officers.
- (3)
 - (a) The sentencing commission is composed of 17 voting members.
 - (b) The sentencing commission's members are:
 - (i) the executive director of the Department of Corrections
 - (ii) the director of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services
 - (iii) the executive director of the commission or the executive director's designee;
 - (iv) the chair of the Board of Pardons and Parole or the chair's designee;
 - (v) the state court administrator or the state court administrator's designee;
 - (vi) three criminal defense attorneys, appointed by the Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, with one being a criminal defense attorney in a rural county;
 - (vii) the attorney general or the attorney general's designee;
 - (viii) three criminal prosecuting attorneys, appointed by the Statewide Association of Public Attorneys and Prosecutors, one criminal prosecuting attorney in rural county;
 - (ix) two representatives of the Utah Sheriffs Association, appointed by the Utah Sheriffs Association, with at least one being a representative of a sheriff from a rural county;
 - (x) one representative of the Utah Chiefs of Police Association
 - (xi) an individual who assists in the rehabilitation of individuals convicted of an offense;
 - (xii) the chair of the Utah Victim Services Commission
- (4) The following may serve as nonvoting members:
 - (a) a district court judge appointed by the Judicial Council;
 - (b) a juvenile court judge appointed by the Judicial Council; and
 - (c) the chair of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 291, 2026 General Session

About This Publication

This publication profiles all twenty documented participants in the Utah Sentencing Commission (17 voting members, with the 3 judicial/JJOC seats carved out as non-voting) as created within the Department of Criminal Justice (DOCJ), the parent body of Utah's criminal-justice advisory apparatus under Utah Code §75E-4-102. Each profile draws on official Sentencing Commission meeting minutes and transcripts spanning the 2026 General Session and the subsequent January–March interim period (April–November, up to September captured as of this publication), supplemented by public biographical records, agency websites, and prior UTRSOL research.

Where a member's seat was occupied by proxy for some or all of the period reviewed, that proxy's own presence and participation is documented alongside the appointed member's. Where the record is incomplete, inconsistent, or unresolved, a discrepancy in a title, a gap in attendance, a name transcribed differently across meetings, this document says so directly rather than assuming an answer. The goal throughout is an accurate account of who actually occupies these seats and how they use them, not a comprehensive biography of each individual.

A closing synthesis draws the twenty individual profiles together into patterns: who drives deliberation, who sits silent, where proxy culture substitutes for the appointed member, and where independent testimony has, rarely, changed an outcome.

If these profiles are inaccurate or incomplete, contact us at communications@utrsol.org.

Office of Utah for Rational Sex Offense Laws

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

The Sentencing Commission

Utah Sentencing Commission • Utah Code §75E-4-102

What It Is

The Utah Sentencing Commission is a commission created within the Department of Criminal Justice (DOCJ) under Utah Code §63M-7-404 (now recodified as §75E-4-102) under S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification,” composed of twenty members drawn from state agencies, the prosecution and defense bar, law enforcement associations, the judiciary, and gubernatorial appointees, including the executive director of the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice or the executive director's designee as one of its own members. It is tasked with developing and reviewing sentencing and release guidelines, advising on sentencing policy and related legislation, and coordinating the perspectives of the state agencies, professional and law enforcement associations, and judicial and gubernatorial appointees that make up its twenty-member commission.

This membership profile serves as a useful guide and introduction to the Commission's organization, its processes, procedures, deliberations, and the individuals who carry out its statutory mandate, offering both a reference for identifying who holds each seat and a documented account of how that mandate was exercised, or set aside, in practice.

A note on pre-restructuring defense representation: prior to H.B. 274's restructuring, David Ferguson sat as a third active defense-bar participant, engaged at nearly every General Session meeting and known as one of the more frequent dissenting voices during that period rather than a single, isolated holdout. He does not hold a seat in the current roster. The restructuring's renumbering pattern suggests Ferguson's seat was one of the two replaced rather than continued. This is noted here rather than attributed to either individual profile.

Membership: 20 Documented Participants

Seats under §75E-4-102(3) cover agency heads, professional-association appointees, and gubernatorial designees (Corrections, JJYS, CCJJ's own executive director, the Board of Pardons, the Courts/AOC, three UACDL defense seats including one rural, the Attorney

General, three SWAP prosecutor seats including one rural, two Sheriffs' Association seats, the VSC chair, a Governor-appointed rehabilitation seat, and the Police Chiefs' Association). The the JJOC chair or designee and two additional judges, one District Court, one Juvenile Court, sit as non-voting members under a separate subsection, §75E-4-102(4), outside the main lettered structure entirely, the same pattern already documented at CCJJ Commission. The Sentencing Commission's structure is split across two subsections, with its two judicial seats carved out as non-voting and structurally separate.

Who Actually Drives Deliberation

Roughly six of twenty members carry most of the commission's real weight, and authority here clusters closely around formal titles. Ryan Robinson (SWAP prosecutor seat), who chairs, is the commission's most frequently mentioned figure since the June 2026 restructuring, presiding with genuine institutional weight rather than a titular role. Pam Vickrey (UACDL Juvenile Defense seat), Vice Chair, presents a sharper contrast: she chaired the commission through the entire H.B. 274 fight over her own profession's representation, then was specifically moved to the Vice Chair position once the restructuring took effect, procedural authority that is real but diminished, not stable.

The rest of the active core is a mix of formal and informal weight: Christina Zidow, the Governor-appointed rehabilitation seat, one of the most personally active members documented in this series, independently initiating procedural action rather than only reacting to others' motions; Mike Smith, one of the commission's two Sheriffs' Association seats, genuinely active across roughly twenty documented mentions, in sharp contrast to his fellow sheriff seat-holder's near-total silence despite holding the identical statutory designation; and Stewart M. Young, the Attorney General designee, a consistent, engaged voting presence throughout. Everyone else is intermittently active or functionally silent, including several seats, one of the two Sheriffs' Association seats and both non-voting judicial seats, that show essentially no documented activity despite genuine institutional standing or directly relevant credentials.

Consolidation at the DOCJ Launch

Effective July 1, 2026, Tom Ross moved from CCJJ Director to DOCJ Commissioner, and Dan Strong, formerly the commission's staff analyst, became the new CCJJ Director, inheriting Ross's voting seat on the Sentencing Commission as part of a three-body bundle that also included CCJJ Commission and the Victim Services Commission. Strong's Sentencing Commission seat sits alongside a genuinely active membership — Christina Zidow, Mike Smith, and Stewart Young among them — meaning his arrival did not simply fill an empty chair but folded a cross-institutional, staff-turned-executive role into a body that already had real working members driving its deliberation. That one person's institutional footprint could extend across three nominally independent commissions, transferring at once through a single administrative reorganization rather than three separate appointments, is itself a structural feature of how this commission's membership was assembled.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Jared Garcia

*Commissioner, Utah Department of Corrections
Sentencing Commission, Corrections Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(i): the executive director of the Department of Corrections or the executive director's designee	TERM-026993	Current — start 5/1/2024

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(i). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). During the 2026 General Session itself, the equivalent seat was designated under Title 63M, Chapter 7. This seat’s term start (5/1/2024) postdates his CCJJ Commission seat’s term start by over a year, consistent with his Sentencing Commission seat being a later, secondary addition to his institutional footprint rather than a concurrent original appointment.

Background

Commissioner, Utah Department of Corrections, appointed March 2025 (corrections.utah.gov); UDC Deputy Executive Director from Oct. 2023. Prior career almost entirely in law enforcement: Utah DPS from 2002 (Highway Patrol, State Bureau of Investigation; oversaw UHP Central Bureau, SERT, Dive Team; captain over SBI; oversaw DPS Victim Services and narcotics/violent-crime task forces); Chief of Police, Moab, from May 2022; IACP “40 Under 40,” 2017; bachelor’s (Columbia College) and master’s (Univ. of San Diego), criminal justice/public safety leadership.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Jared Garcia’s Sentencing Commission seat is documented across every meeting reviewed, and every single appearance is by proxy rather than in person. Four different named individuals have carried the seat over the course of 2026: Tim Kincaid (January 15 and February 5), Mike Schoenfeld (January 29, February 12, and February 19), Spencer Turley (June 18), and Spencer Turley again (September 2). No comment or independent position is attributed to Garcia personally at any point covered. Unlike seats represented by a single standing designee, this one rotates between multiple people across the year, with no indication of who determines the assignment or why it changes as often as it does.

Presence by Proxy

Tim Kincaid, Mike Schoenfeld, and Spencer Turley each appear in the Sentencing Commission's meeting record exclusively as proxies for this seat, attending and voting on Garcia's behalf rather than in their own right. None holds an independent seat or vote of his own on this commission. The rotation between three different names, rather than one consistent proxy, distinguishes this seat's pattern from the Courts/AOC seat (where Michael Dreschel is the single, consistent proxy for Neira Siaperas), this seat's coverage looks more ad hoc, assigned meeting-by-meeting from within Corrections rather than delegated to one standing deputy.

Characterization

Garcia's Sentencing Commission profile shows a seat that is consistently filled, but never once by Garcia himself across the full record reviewed. That distinguishes it from a seat attended reactively or intermittently, someone from Corrections attends essentially every meeting, but it also means the seat's actual perspective on any given vote can't be attributed to Garcia's own judgment with any confidence, since it passes through a different hand almost every time. Whether this reflects a deliberate practice of rotating junior staff through the seat, scheduling conflicts resolved ad hoc, or simply a lower institutional priority placed on sending the same person consistently cannot be determined from the record alone. It stands in some contrast to other agency-held seats in this series where a single designee (or the principal personally) maintains continuity meeting to meeting.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Multiple (Jan 15–Feb 19, 2026 General Session)	Proxy votes cast by Tim Kincaid and Mike Schoenfeld across five meetings	Not itemized — general pattern is proxy attendance without a standout dissenting position
Unspecified (June 18, 2026)	Proxy vote cast by Spencer Turley	Not itemized

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the Corrections seat (seat b), also regularly proxied, there by Spencer Turley specifically, the same individual who carries the Sentencing Commission seat at the June 18, 2026 meeting. That overlap suggests Turley may be Garcia's more senior or general-purpose designee across bodies, while Kincaid and Schoenfeld's appearances are specific to the Sentencing Commission's General Session meetings.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

April Graham

Director, Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services

Utah DHHS

CCJJ Commission and Sentencing Commission Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(ii): the director of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services or the director's designee	TERM-026994	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/7/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(ii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). During the 2026 General Session itself, the equivalent seat was designated under Title 63M, Chapter 7. The term start (5/7/2026) sits one day after the §63M-7-204(z)→(y) renumbering’s own effective date (5/6/2026) — both changes appear to trace to the same recodification vehicle, S.B. 323, taking effect within a day of each other.

Background

Director, Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services (JJYS), Utah Department of Health and Human Services (jjys.utah.gov); previously Deputy Director under Brett Peterson before her promotion. Master’s in Social Work, University of Utah (2009–2013). Career built from the ground up within the division: began as a case manager and parole officer, advanced to Assistant Program Director, then Deputy Director, now Director. Also a member of the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice (UBJJ) and has testified directly to the LECJ Judiciary Interim Committee on juvenile expungement barriers, alongside Pam Vickrey and Brett Peterson.

Presence in the Meeting Record

A heavy, substantive presence at the Sentencing Commission, consistent with JJYS’s direct institutional stake in nearly every juvenile-adjacent sentencing question the commission handles. She is a regular, self-present voting member across the meetings reviewed, appearing under her own name rather than through a designee, and engaging directly on bills touching juvenile sentencing, transfer, and release policy. Her participation reads as substantive rather than routine attendance, consistent with someone speaking from direct programmatic knowledge of how sentencing decisions affect the youth population her office serves. This level of engagement places her among the commission’s more consistently active voting members.

Characterization

Graham attended the Sentencing Commission's meetings in person and under her own name throughout the sessions reviewed. She was recorded seconding motions, casting individual votes, and speaking directly to bills touching juvenile sentencing, transfer, and release policy. Her participation was not limited to a single high-visibility moment but appeared consistently across the meetings covered. At CCJJ Commission, the same pattern held: her H.B. 48 testimony produced one of only two documented opposition votes that commission cast all session. Taken together, the record shows a member whose attendance and voting record track directly with JJYS's institutional stake in the commission's work.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Multiple juvenile-sentencing bills	Regular, substantive engagement documented; specific bill-by-bill positions not individually itemized in the material reviewed.	Not itemized — general pattern is active, engaged participation

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the JJYS seat (seat q), where her H.B. 48 testimony produced one of only two CCJJ Commission opposition votes all session. She is also listed as a SOMAC member (Deputy/Interim Director, JJYS) per that commission's roster, though this role was not independently profiled given SOMAC's inactivity.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Daniel Strong

*Executive Director, Criminal Justice, Utah DOJ
Sentencing Commission, Executive Director Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(iii): the executive director of the commission or the executive director's designee	TERM-026995	Current — 7/1/2026 to 7/1/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(iii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). The term start (7/1/2026) matches the DOJ launch date already documented throughout this profile series, the same day Tom Ross moved from CCJJ Director to Commissioner and Strong took over the voting seats Ross previously held at CCJJ Commission, the Sentencing Commission, and the VSC.

Background

Executive Director, Criminal Justice, Utah Department of Criminal Justice. In that role he directs both the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and the Utah Sentencing Commission; also serves as the Department’s public information officer, records officer, and staff to the Governor for judicial appointments. Previously a prosecutor for over ten years at the city, state, and federal levels; earlier in his career, a criminal defense attorney. J.D., University of California, Berkeley Law School; graduate of the University of Virginia.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Prior to July 1, 2026, this seat was held and exercised by Tom Ross, the commission’s then-CCJJ Director, who attended, motioned, and voted under his own name across the General Session. Strong’s own role during that period was separate from the seat: as the commission’s staff analyst, he was substantively influential in preparing bill summaries and guideline proposals, but held no vote and did not occupy this seat. On July 1, 2026, Strong inherited the seat directly from Ross as part of the DOJ restructuring, becoming the Sentencing Commission’s institutional voice on the seat in his own right. Because Strong’s prior staff work gave him deep familiarity with the commission’s business, his transition into the seat carried forward substantial institutional knowledge even though the seat’s own voting history before July 1 belongs to Ross, not to Strong.

Characterization

Strong's Sentencing Commission profile is less a single continuous arc than the convergence of two separate institutional roles. Before July 1, 2026, his influence ran through an advisory, non-voting staff position that operated alongside whoever held this seat at the time — Tom Ross, who attended and voted on the commission's business in his own right. Strong's appointment to the seat itself on July 1, 2026 is where his personal voting history with this seat begins. His prior staff work gave him direct familiarity with the commission's guideline process before he ever cast a vote in his own right. The bundled transfer means one individual now holds voting seats on all three DOCJ-family commissions simultaneously. That concentration is a structural fact about how these bodies' oversight function is currently distributed, independent of how any individual exercises it.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Multiple (staff era)	As staff analyst pre-7/1/2026, provided analysis without a personal vote.	N/A — non-voting staff role
Unspecified (voting era)	Assumed formal voting seat 7/1/2026; specific post-transition bill positions not individually itemized.	Not itemized

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the CCJJ Director seat (seat o), inherited from Tom Ross as part of a three-body bundle. He holds the same CCJJ Executive Director designee seat at VSC, inherited from Ross as part of that same bundle.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Blake Hills

*Chair, Utah Board of Pardons and Parole
CCJJ Commission and Sentencing Commission
Board of Pardons Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(iv): the chair of the Board of Pardons and Parole or the chair's designee	TERM-026996	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/7/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(iv). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). During the 2026 General Session itself, the equivalent seat was designated under Title 63M, Chapter 7. The term start (5/7/2026) matches April Graham’s companion Sentencing Commission seat, one day after the §63M-7-204(z)→(y) renumbering’s own effective date, both changes likely trace to the same S.B. 323 recodification taking effect within a day of each other.

Background

Chair, Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, appointed by Gov. Spencer Cox in October 2025; first appointed to the Board by Cox in March 2021. Appellate clerk for the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals for roughly two years after law school, then approximately 21 years as a prosecutor at the Salt Lake County District Attorney’s Office and the Summit County Attorney’s Office, focused on homicide, special-victim, and domestic-violence cases. Raised in Centerville, Utah; B.S. in Economics and Geography, Weber State University; J.D., University of Utah College of Law.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Blake Hills attends and takes part in the Sentencing Commission’s work throughout the sessions covered, generally in person and under his own name. On a handful of occasions, a designated colleague has stepped in to carry his seat when other obligations pulled him away, but this remains the exception rather than the rule in his overall pattern of engagement. Given that he chairs the Board of Pardons and Parole in his own right, that steady personal presence tracks with someone whose day-to-day work already keeps him closely tied to the kinds of release and sentencing questions this commission takes up. The two roles clearly reinforce each other.

Characterization

Hills's record reflects a member who treats the seat as a standing personal responsibility, showing up and participating directly across the great majority of the commission's business. The handful of occasions where a designee has stood in for him are notable precisely because they stand out against an otherwise consistent pattern of personal engagement, rather than defining his overall approach to the role. That consistency fits a chair whose own agency sits downstream of nearly every sentencing decision the commission makes, giving him little reason to treat the seat as anything less than central to his work.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
SB 27 (Jan 15)	Proxy (Brittany Karzen) voted Support	Passed, 2 opposed
Unspecified (June 18)	Proxy (Brittany Karzen) attended and seconded a motion	Not itemized

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the Board of Pardons seat (seat h), where he functions as the unchallenged domain authority whenever Board of Pardons business arises. He is also listed as a SOMAC member (Interim BOPP Chair) per that commission's roster, though this role was not independently profiled.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Neira Siaperas

Deputy State Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Courts

Sentencing Commission, Courts Seat

Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(v): the state court administrator or the state court administrator's designee	TERM-026997	Current — start 5/1/2024

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(v). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat’s designation places it among the professional and institutional appointments restructured under the same recodification effort that touched several other Sentencing Commission seats documented in this series.

Background

Deputy State Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Courts. Listed as the official contact for the AOC/Judicial Council public body on Utah’s public-notice registry. Also serves as staff to the Board of Senior Judges. Her role combines administrative oversight of the state court system with direct staff support to a judicial body, giving her seat on the commission a distinctly institutional, court-system-facing vantage point relative to the commission’s other appointees. That administrative focus suggests her seat is designed to channel the courts’ institutional perspective into the commission’s work, rather than to represent an individual judge’s personal views on sentencing policy.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Neira Siaperas’s seat on the Sentencing Commission is carried, in the great majority of instances, by a designated colleague who shows up and participates in her place. She herself appears personally on one notable occasion, during the meeting that installed the commission’s new leadership, standing apart from an otherwise consistent pattern of delegated representation. As Deputy State Court Administrator, her office sits at the center of the court system’s day-to-day operations, which may leave her with less room than other members to attend a body that meets on a recurring schedule throughout the year. Her choice to appear in person specifically for the leadership transition suggests she treats that particular moment as significant enough to warrant her own presence.

Proxy Presence in the Meeting Record

Michael Dreschel appears in the Sentencing Commission's meeting record exclusively as a proxy, attending and voting on behalf of the seat's formally appointed member rather than in his own right, across January and February 2026. His participation follows the same procedural pattern as any other proxy attendance: he is recorded as present and voting under the seat he represents, without an independent seat or vote of his own on this commission. He shows up consistently enough in this capacity that his name recurs as the seat's de facto attendee rather than as an occasional substitute, appearing more often than not across the General Session.

Characterization

Siaperas's profile is defined almost entirely by delegated representation rather than personal engagement, with her seat's actual work carried out by the same colleague in nearly every instance covered. Dreschel holds no independent seat or vote of his own on this commission and is recorded exclusively as her proxy. Whatever the Administrative Office of the Courts' actual position has been on Sentencing Commission business this year, the record does not show it delivered by the person formally holding the seat.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (Jan 22–Feb 19, 2026)	Represented by proxy Michael Dreschel across five meetings	No personal votes attributable to Siaperas
June 18, 2026 (officer elections / new member introductions)	Personally present; no individual vote or comment separately attributed	First documented personal appearance in the record reviewed

Cross-Commission Footprint

She is not the seat-holder at CCJJ Commission, where Ron Gordon holds the Courts seat instead; however, the same proxy, Michael Dreschel, carries both her seat here and Gordon's seat at CCJJ Commission. No confirmed seat or documented activity exists at VSC.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Rich Mauro

Attorney at Law, Salt Lake City

Sentencing Commission, Indigent Defense Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(vi): three criminal defense attorneys, appointed by the Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	TERM-026998	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/7/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(vi). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This citation describes the seat category broadly (“three criminal defense attorneys, appointed by UACDL”) without distinguishing among them, but the commission’s own official roster breaks the three seats out individually by practice focus, Pam Vickrey (Juvenile Court), Lance Dean (Rural), and Mauro himself (Indigent Defense).

Background

Private criminal defense attorney, Salt Lake City; S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah, 1988. Law clerk, Utah Court of Appeals, 1989. Trial attorney, Salt Lake Legal Defender Association, 1990–1997, promoted to misdemeanor chief, then elevated in 1993 to the felony division handling rape, sexual assault, drug distribution, aggravated assault, and murder cases. Left the public defender’s office in 1997 to found his own firm; practice today splits roughly evenly between state cases (DUI, sexual assault, theft, drug, domestic assault, homicide) and federal cases (drug conspiracy, racketeering, fraud, and child pornography). Handled multiple capital cases in both state and federal court. Former adjunct professor, University of Utah College of Law; past president, Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; named to Best Lawyers in America.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Rich Mauro holds one of the three UACDL-appointed defense seats and is, for the most part, personally present across the sessions covered. A colleague stands in for him at the very first General Session meeting of the year, after which Mauro shows up and takes part directly under his own name through the middle stretch of the session. He falls back into that delegated pattern for the meeting that installs the commission’s current leadership, with

the same colleague again carrying his seat that day, including on the question of who would chair. When the commission takes up the restructuring of its own defense representation, Mauro is present in person and stands apart from nearly everyone else in the room, holding back where the rest of the commission falls in line almost unanimously. The sharpest public criticism of that restructuring that day actually comes from someone else, sitting in for a different seat-holder, but Mauro's own reservation is the one dissent that traces back to a sitting member rather than a stand-in. Months later, when the commission takes up its central guideline decision for sex offenses, Mauro is again present himself and again breaks from the room, this time standing against the presumptive-prison approach the rest of the commission adopts.

Characterization

Mauro's Sentencing Commission profile shows a member who is personally, actively present for most of the substantive business across 2026, engaging directly with legislation affecting his own professional constituency and his seat's underlying policy stakes rather than deferring to a designee as a matter of course. His two clearest moments of dissent bookend the year's guideline fight: holding back where the commission restructured its own defense representation in February, and standing apart when that same restructuring helped carry the harsher guideline overhaul through in September. Read together, those two moments suggest a consistent substantive position, skepticism of both the process that reshaped the commission's defense representation and the outcome that process ultimately produced, rather than two unrelated, disconnected instances.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
H.B. 274 (Sentencing Commission restructuring, 2/12)	Personally present; recorded abstention	Sole dissent in the 13-0-1 vote
Chairmanship nomination (Ryan Robinson, June 18)	Proxy (Mark Moffat) recorded opposition	Sole opposition; motion still passed
Form 3, Option 1 (presumptive prison shading, Sept 2026)	Personally present; voted No	Broke from the 14-3 commission majority

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the Indigent Defense seat (seat 1), where he stands as the clearest repeat dissenter across that commission's own profile series.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Lance Dean

Attorney at Law, Vernal, Utah

Sentencing Commission, UACDL Rural Defense Attorney Seat

Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(vi): three criminal defense attorneys, appointed by the Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, with at least one being a criminal defense attorney in a rural county	TERM-028712	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(vi). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026), the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). Dean’s Seat ID (16771) and Term ID (028712) fall in a visibly different numbering range, consistent with his seat being newly created by the H.B. 274 restructuring rather than a renumbered continuation of a prior appointment, matching the meeting record below, where he is introduced as a brand-new member. Term end (5/6/2030) is one day short of a clean four-year cycle from the term start, unlike the round 5/7/2026–5/7/2030 terms on the other Sentencing Commission profiles in this series.

Background

Attorney, Vernal, Utah, Eighth Judicial District (Uintah, Duchesne, and Daggett Counties); approximately 34 years in general practice, with a criminal law focus (Justia, Lawyer.com). Hired in 2018 as Uintah County’s first Managing Public Defender, building the county’s indigent-defense program from scratch, under his leadership, applicant interest grew from fewer than five bidders to roughly thirty qualified attorneys, allowing the county to build a stronger defender roster and reduce caseloads. Represents indigent defendants in Uintah County Justice Court, Eighth District Court in Daggett County, and Uintah County Drug Court. Also serves on the Eighth District Judicial Nominating Commission. This combination of long-standing general practice experience and direct administrative responsibility for building a public defense system gives him a practical, on-the-ground perspective on indigent defense that few other appointees bring to a statewide commission.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Lance Dean joins the Sentencing Commission as its newly appointed Rural County Defense Representative and is active from the outset, taking part in the proceedings that installed the commission's current chair. He remains engaged in the months that follow, and when the commission takes up its defining guideline decision, he stands apart from most of his colleagues in the position he lands on.

Characterization

Dean's short tenure has already produced a genuinely substantive moment: faced with the commission's central guideline decision, he broke from the majority rather than following the room, as a brand-new member might otherwise be expected to. Given his background building indigent-defense capacity in a rural county, his dissent on the commission's central guideline decision came within months of his appointment. Whether this becomes a sustained pattern or was specific to this one decision isn't something his short tenure can yet settle, but it is a meaningful first data point for a seat with so little history behind it.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Chairmanship nomination (Ryan Robinson, June 18)	Personally present; voted Yes	Consistent with the vote that elected Robinson
Form 3, Option 1 (presumptive prison shading, Sept 2)	Personally present; voted No	Broke from the 14-3 commission majority

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Pam Vickrey

*Executive Director, Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys
CCJJ Commission and Sentencing Commission
Sentencing Commission Chair Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(vi): three criminal defense attorneys, appointed by the Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	TERM-028711	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(vi). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This citation covers all three UACDL defense seats without distinguishing practice focus; the commission’s own official roster lists her specifically as “Defense Attorney (Juvenile Court)” and as current Vice Chair. Term start (5/7/2026) is one day after the §63M-7-204(z)→(y) renumbering’s own effective date, both likely tied to the same S.B. 323 recodification vehicle.

Background

Executive Director, Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys, LLC, since 2010; previously a trial attorney with the firm’s predecessor, Pappas and Associates, for ten years. Runs an office of nine trial attorneys, two social workers, and two appellate attorneys. Also chairs the Juvenile Subcommittee of the Utah Sentencing Commission; sits on the Indigent Defense Commission and Salt Lake County’s Criminal Justice Advisory Council; juvenile-defense representative on CCJJ’s Juvenile Justice Implementation Committee. First certified Juvenile Training Immersion Program (JTIP) trainer in Utah. Credited with numerous Utah juvenile-justice reforms: the state’s first juvenile mental health court, ending indiscriminate shackling of youth, eliminating juvenile life-without-parole, and an omnibus juvenile-justice reform bill addressing racial and ethnic disparities.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Pam Vickrey chaired the Sentencing Commission through the entire General Session, presiding over deliberations including the H.B. 274 restructuring fight that directly affected her own profession’s representation on the commission. During that process, she departed from her usual neutral posture as chair to voice personal frustration on the record about the

outcome. Once the restructuring took effect at the June 18, 2026 meeting, she was elected Vice Chair rather than retained as Chair, marking a documented shift in her formal role. Throughout both phases, she remains a consistently self-present, actively engaged member rather than one whose participation diminished alongside her change in title.

Characterization

Vickrey's Sentencing Commission profile documents a member who presided over the very process that reshaped her own institutional standing, rather than one insulated from the consequences of the commission's decisions. Her shift from Chair to Vice Chair coincided directly with a restructuring that altered defense representation on the commission she had led, making her professional stake in that outcome unusually direct and personal. Despite the change in title, her sustained, active presence throughout both phases indicates continued engagement with the commission's work rather than withdrawal following the loss of her chairmanship. She remained a self-present, actively engaged member in the meetings that followed, continuing to second motions and take part in deliberation under the new structure.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
H.B. 274 (composition restructuring)	Presided over the vote as Chair through the fight over her own profession's representation; personal vote not separately recorded from her chairing role.	Not determinable as a personal vote – she chaired the process, then was demoted once it passed

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the Sentencing Commission chair seat (seat i), a position that exists there specifically because she chairs the Sentencing Commission.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Stewart Young

Criminal Deputy Attorney General

CCJJ Commission, Sentencing Commission, and VSC

Attorney General's Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(vii): the attorney general or the attorney general's designee	TERM-028713	Current – 1/1/2025 to 12/31/2028

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(vii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat’s term (1/1/2025–12/31/2028) is on a calendar-year cycle distinct from the 5/7/2026-start pattern seen on several companion Sentencing Commission profiles in this series, and predates the May 6, 2026 recodification itself, consistent with an appointment carried forward rather than newly created by S.B. 323.

Background

Criminal Deputy Attorney General for the Office of the Utah Attorney General, part of the AG’s Executive team. Previously Senior Litigation Counsel and Training Officer in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Utah, with time in its Financial Fraud, Violent Crime, and Narcotics sections; lead or co-counsel on 20 felony jury trials and 22 appellate briefs. Recently served as a counterterrorism prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice in Amman, Jordan. Career began as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of California; later a tenure-track law professor at the University of Wyoming College of Law. Clerked for the Ninth Circuit and for Judge Paul Cassell, U.S. District Court for the District of Utah. Stanford Law School and Princeton University graduate.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Stewart Young attends and takes part in the Sentencing Commission’s proceedings personally and consistently across the sessions covered. On one notable occasion, when the commission installed its new chair, a colleague stood in for him to formally advance that nomination, but Young’s broader pattern is one of direct, personal engagement with the commission’s business. As the Attorney General’s own designee to the commission, that consistency is in keeping with a seat meant to carry the office’s institutional perspective directly rather than at a remove. His background trying felony cases and training prosecutors likely gives that perspective more practical weight.

Characterization

Young's record reflects steady, personal engagement with one meaningful exception: the moment his seat's most consequential procedural action of the year was carried out by someone standing in for him. That single instance doesn't define his overall pattern, which otherwise shows dependable, self-directed participation in the commission's ongoing work. A single scheduling gap on an otherwise reliable record reads as an isolated absence rather than a sign of diminished engagement with the seat. Nothing in the broader record suggests the Attorney General's office treats this seat as anything but a priority.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Chairmanship nomination (Ryan Robinson, June 18)	Proxy (Craig Peterson) made the nominating motion	Passed

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the AG seat (seat e), where he is present and never proxied. He is not the seat-holder at VSC, where Kaye Lynn Wootton instead holds the AG designee seat, a different individual, reflecting that the AG's Office sends separate designees to different bodies rather than one cross-cutting representative.

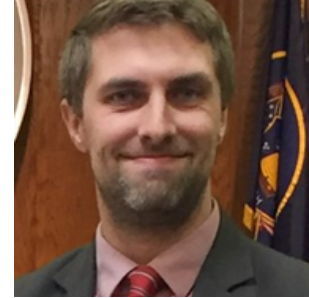
Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Carl Hollan

Executive Director

Statewide Association of Prosecutors (SWAP)

Sentencing Commission, SWAP Prosecutor Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(vii): three criminal prosecutors, appointed by the Statewide Association of Public Attorneys and Prosecutors	TERM-028715	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(viii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). One of three SWAP-appointed prosecutor seats per the commission’s own official roster, alongside Ryan Robinson (Chair) and Chad Dotson.

Background

Executive Director, Statewide Association of Prosecutors (SWAP), confirmed via the Utah Legislature’s own committee record. Testified before the Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee on Jan. 30, 2026, in support of three separate bills in a single hearing: S.B. 125 (Theft of Service Amendments), S.B. 133 (Offender Registry Amendments, presented with Pam Vickrey’s assistance), and S.B. 184 (Post-Conviction Offense Amendments). Testifying on three separate bills in a single hearing suggests an organization actively engaged across multiple areas of criminal justice policy rather than one focused narrowly on a single legislative priority.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Carl Hollan’s relationship to the Sentencing Commission has two distinct phases. During the General Session, he is not yet a seated member: he attends as a visitor and, on at least one occasion (February 5, 2026), serves as proxy for Ryan Robinson, making and seconding motions in Robinson’s stead. He is not listed as a member (present or proxied) at any other General Session meeting reviewed. That changes at the June 18, 2026 meeting, where the commission’s own minutes list him under “New Members... Carl Hollan: Voting member for SWAP,” he is seated that day as a full voting member in his own right, not a proxy, and immediately active: he seconds the motion to nominate Ryan Robinson as Chair and himself makes the motion to nominate Pam Vickrey as Vice Chair.

Characterization

Hollan's Sentencing Commission profile is not one of an absent seat-holder but of a member whose institutional role changed partway through the year. His pre-June activity is real but borrowed, a single documented appearance carrying Ryan Robinson's seat rather than exercising standing of his own. Once formally seated in June, he moves immediately into active participation, including a leadership role in the same meeting's officer elections. Read together, the record shows continuity rather than a gap: the same person who occasionally stood in for Robinson during the session became a voting member himself once the commission's post-restructuring roster took effect, which may itself explain why he was a familiar enough presence in the room to be trusted with a proxy vote before he held a seat.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (Feb 5, 2026, as proxy for Ryan Robinson)	Made/seconded procedural motions on Robinson's behalf	Not itemized – proxy capacity, not a personal vote
Chairmanship nomination (Ryan Robinson, June 18)	Seconded the motion, in his own right as new voting member	Passed
Vice-chairmanship nomination (Pam Vickrey, June 18)	Made the motion, in his own right	Passed

Cross-Commission Footprint

His relationship to CCJJ Commission is a proxy relationship with Ryan Robinson, documented specifically at the Sentencing Commission's February 5, 2026 meeting, before Hollan held a seat of his own. That relationship predates and explains his later formal seating: the June 18, 2026 minutes list him under "New Members... Carl Hollan: Voting member for SWAP," at which point his votes and Robinson's are recorded separately with no further proxy relationship between them.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Ryan Robinson

*Division Head, Prosecution Division, West Valley City
Chair, Utah Sentencing Commission (SWAP Seat)*

Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(viii): three criminal prosecutors, appointed by the Statewide Association of Public Attorneys and Prosecutors	TERM-028714	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(viii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026), the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). Robinson was elected chair of the Sentencing Commission on June 18, 2026. His election to the chairmanship came at the same meeting that seated several newly appointed members, placing him at the head of the commission during a period of broader membership transition.

Background

Division Head, Prosecution Division, City Attorney's Office, West Valley City. Supervises six additional prosecuting attorneys, three executive legal secretaries, and two police-department Investigator/Process Servers. The division prosecutes federal, state, and municipal violations in U.S. Federal Court, the Third Judicial District Court, and the West Valley City Justice Court, and also houses the city's Victim Services Office — giving him a direct institutional connection to victim-services subject matter distinct from his Sentencing Commission seat.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Ryan Robinson is the most frequently mentioned figure in the Sentencing Commission material reviewed, consistent with his role as the commission's current Chair. He runs the body's meetings rather than simply attending them, presiding over deliberations and votes across the sessions covered. His participation reflects sustained, hands-on institutional leadership rather than intermittent or ceremonial presence. Throughout the record, he appears as a consistent, self-present voice directing the commission's proceedings rather than one requiring a designee to carry the seat.

Characterization

Robinson's Sentencing Commission profile reflects a member whose formal authority and actual working presence are closely aligned, rather than a chair who presides without substantive involvement. His election coincided with a period of broader membership change on the commission, placing him in a leadership role during a moment of institutional transition rather than continuity. The volume and consistency of his documented participation suggest active, hands-on management of the commission's proceedings rather than a largely ceremonial chairmanship. Taken together, his profile depicts a chair whose institutional weight is grounded in sustained, personal engagement with the body he leads.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified	As Chair since June 18, 2026, runs and presides over votes; personal position on any single bill not separately itemized from his chairing role.	Not itemized

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the SWAP/prosecutors seat (seat m), where he is a routine, engaged voting presence without the chairing role he holds here. He holds no formal seat at VSC, but functions there as an informally consulted prosecutorial voice on specific bills despite that absence of a formal seat.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Chad Jensen

*Sheriff, Cache County
Chair, CCJJ Commission
Sheriffs' Association Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(ix): two representatives of the Utah Sheriffs' Association, appointed by the Utah Sheriffs' Association	TERM-028719	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(i). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat is one of two Sheriffs' Association-designated positions on the Sentencing Commission, sharing the same statutory paragraph as Mike Smith's companion seat, reflecting law enforcement's dual representation on the body rather than a single consolidated seat.

Background

Sheriff, Cache County, elected 2015; 33 years with the Cache County Sheriff's Office, entering in 1992 in the jail division and advancing through Investigations. First member of the office's SWAT team (formed 1995), later SWAT Commander for a decade. Utah Sheriffs Association leadership since 2017: Secretary, President (2020–2022), Immediate Past President, Past President. Law enforcement runs in his family, his father served with Logan City Police, his uncle was a Salt Lake County Sheriff, and another uncle retired as a Utah Highway Patrol captain.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Chad Jensen attends and participates in the Sentencing Commission's work personally rather than through a designee. He is present and engaged during the proceedings that installed the commission's current leadership, and he continues to show up and take part directly in the months that follow, including through the commission's most consequential guideline work. His engagement is concentrated in the commission's more recent, higher-stakes sessions rather than spread evenly across the full year, but within that window his presence is personal and sustained rather than occasional.

Characterization

Jensen's seat is genuinely exercised rather than merely held. He shows up, is recognized individually, and engages directly with both the commission's routine business and its most consequential substantive decisions, standing alongside his fellow law enforcement colleagues as the guideline overhaul takes shape. His footprint earlier in the year is thinner than his later presence, which may simply reflect where the available material is sparsest rather than any real difference in his overall level of involvement.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Chairmanship nomination (Ryan Robinson, June 18)	Personally present; voted Yes	Consistent with the vote that elected Robinson
Minutes approval (Sept 2)	Personally present; voted Yes/Support	Passed
Form 3, Option 1 (presumptive prison shading, Sept 2)	Personally present; voted Yes	Consistent with the 14-3 majority
Form 1 (Sept 2)	Personally present; voted Support	Passed

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the Sheriffs Association seat (seat g), where he serves as that commission's actual Chair, presiding over nearly every meeting. He holds no formal seat at VSC, and no confirmed activity was identified there.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Solomon Oberg

Chief of Police, Kaysville City

Chair, Victim Services Commission

Sentencing Commission, VSC Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(x): the chair of the Utah Victim Services Commission or a member of the VSC designated by the chair	TERM-028717	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(xii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 — the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat corresponds to the Victim Services Commission chair position, reflecting the overlap between the two commissions' formal membership structures.

Background

Chief of Police, Kaysville City, since 2012 (14 years in the role as of 2026); 28 years total in Utah law enforcement (per his own Feb. 2024 Senate Judiciary confirmation letter, le.utah.gov). Appointed to the Utah Victim Services Commission specifically “as a law enforcement representative,” citing his department's adoption of the FBI's ELEVATE victim-services program and specialized IACP training in victim-centered response as his qualifications. Currently the S.A.C.O.P. Representative on the Utah Chiefs of Police Association's statewide Executive Board (2026), serving alongside Association President Chief Brad Bishop.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Solomon Oberg's engagement with the Sentencing Commission takes two distinct forms depending on the session: at some meetings he shows up and participates in person, while at others a designated colleague represents his seat in his stead. Both patterns appear often enough across the sessions covered that neither one can be treated as the exception. Splitting time between his own department in Kaysville and his chairmanship of the Victim Services Commission may account for why personal attendance here doesn't come as consistently as it might for a member with fewer competing institutional demands. Liliana Olvera-Arbon is the designated colleague who most often carries the seat in his absence, appearing under his name across several of the meetings reviewed.

Characterization

Oberg's seat is genuinely active, but through a real mix of personal attendance and delegated representation rather than one consistent mode. That places him closer to members whose seats are frequently carried by a designee than to those who show up and participate personally as a matter of course, even though the seat itself remains engaged with the commission's work either way. His designee appears familiar enough with the commission's work to carry the seat credibly rather than merely holding a place, which softens what an attendance pattern like this might otherwise suggest about the seat's weight. Still, a chair-level appointee splitting his presence this evenly is a meaningfully different mode of engagement than the sustained personal involvement seen elsewhere on the commission.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (Jan 22, Feb 12, Feb 19, June 18)	Represented by proxy Liliana Olvera-Arbon	Not separately itemized
Unspecified (Jan 15, Jan 29, Feb 5)	Personally present	Not separately itemized

Cross-Commission Footprint

At CCJJ Commission, this same principal holds the VSC chair seat (seat k), where he is a regular, engaged voting presence without a chairing role. At VSC itself, he holds the Chair position (Law Enforcement/USOA-UCOPA seat), the one body where his authority is genuinely his own rather than cross-seated from elsewhere.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Christina Zidow

*Director, Behavioral Health Services, SLCPD
Sentencing Commission, Governor-Appointed Rehabilitation
Seat*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(b)(xi): an individual, appointed by the Governor, who assists in the rehabilitation of individuals convicted of an offense	TERM-028720	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(xi). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026), the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). Unlike most other Sentencing Commission seats in this series, this position is appointed directly by the Governor rather than by a professional association or held ex officio through another office.

Background

Director, Behavioral Health Services, Salt Lake City Police Department, a clinical role embedded within law enforcement rather than a sworn position. Previously at Odyssey House, a major Utah substance-use treatment provider, rising from Clinical Social Worker through Program Director, Director of Clinical Operations, to Chief Operating Officer. Also an adjunct professor at Westminster College. Master’s degree, Florida State University; bachelor’s degree, Emory University. LCSW, Licensed Rehabilitation Professional.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Christina Zidow is one of the most personally active members documented on the Sentencing Commission, appearing in more than thirty mentions across the meetings reviewed. She is not merely a routine voting presence: she personally seconds motions, casts individual votes, and at multiple points independently initiates procedural action rather than only reacting to motions raised by others. On at least one bill, she is recorded placing a hold on her own initiative, a level of individual agency not commonly documented among the commission’s members. Her participation is overwhelmingly self-present, with Rebecca Brown an intermittent proxy rather than a pattern of routine delegation. Taken together, the record reflects a member who treats the seat as an active platform for shaping the commission’s work rather than one who participates only when directly called upon.

Characterization

Zidow's Sentencing Commission profile depicts a member who exercises the seat with a notable degree of personal initiative rather than passive attendance. Her willingness to independently raise procedural actions, rather than only responding to motions introduced by others, sets her apart within the commission's documented membership. Combined with her consistent self-presence and high volume of engagement, her record suggests a member genuinely invested in shaping the substance of the commission's work rather than fulfilling a seat as a formality. Taken as a whole, her profile stands among the more actively engaged in this series, marked by sustained, self-directed participation rather than reactive or intermittent involvement.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (AI-related bill)	Independently placed a hold on a bill on her own initiative, rather than in reaction to another member's motion.	Broke from passive consensus-following pattern seen elsewhere on the commission, though outcome/final vote not separately specified

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Vernice Trease

*Third District Court · Sentencing Commission, Judicial Council-
Appointed District Court Judge Seat (Non-Voting)*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(4)(a): a district court judge, appointed by the Judicial Council [non-voting]	TERM-027009	Current – 5/7/2026 to 5/7/2030

This seat falls under subsection (4), distinct from the (3)(b) subsection covering every other Sentencing Commission profile in this series — consistent with the commission's own official roster, which lists her as a non-voting District Court Judge alongside a parallel non-voting Juvenile Court Judge seat (Judge Brody Keisel) and Daniel Meza Rincon's non-voting JJOC seat. Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(4)(a). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026) — the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ’s evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y).

Background

Judge, Third District Court, appointed by Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. in November 2006; serves Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties (utcourts.gov). B.A. in International Relations, Lewis & Clark College; J.D., University of Utah College of Law, 1988. Currently presides over one of the Third District’s two Mental Health Courts. Committee service includes the Judicial Council’s Fine and Bail Schedule Standing Committee, the Supreme Court’s Indigent Criminal Defense Task Force, the Advisory Committees on the Rules of Criminal Procedure and Rules of Evidence, the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion, and the Utah Substance Use and Mental Health Advisory Council. Recipient of the Women Lawyers of Utah’s Woman Lawyer of the Year and Mentor Award, and the Utah Minority Bar Association’s Community Service Award. Formerly chaired the Judicial Council’s Court Interpreter Standing Committee and served on the Utah Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Vernice Trease holds a seat on the Sentencing Commission by virtue of her position on the bench, and while her presence across most of the commission’s business remains hard to detect, she does step forward at a pivotal moment. Arriving only after the meeting where the commission works through its central guideline decision is already underway, she goes

on to raise a pointed, substantive question about how a presumptive-prison framework should actually read to judges applying it from the bench. That single, well-timed contribution stands out against an otherwise largely undocumented pattern of engagement.

Characterization

Trease's profile is less a story of complete absence than of a seat that surfaces rarely but meaningfully when it does. Her question about how presumptive prison should function in practice goes directly to the heart of the commission's most consequential decision, and it comes from someone positioned, better than almost anyone else in the room, to know how that framework will actually play out in a courtroom. That she arrives after the discussion is already underway, rather than being present from the start, suggests her seat may not be a routine priority for her schedule, but when she does engage, her input carries real weight given her vantage point as a sitting judge.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (Sept 2, 2026 – Form 3/Form 1 guideline discussion)	Personally present; posed a substantive question about how presumptive prison should function from the bench. Non-voting seat – no vote cast.	Not itemized – non-voting contribution to discussion only
All other bills / meetings	No documented attendance or participation identified	N/A – non-voting

Cross-Commission Footprint

Trease's seat appears to be unique to the Sentencing Commission. Nothing suggests she holds a comparable position, or plays any role at all, at either of the commission's two sister bodies.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Judge Brody L. Keisel

*Presiding Judge, Sixth District Juvenile Court
Sentencing Commission, Judicial Council-Appointed Juvenile
Court Judge Seat (Non-Voting)*



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(4)(b): a juvenile court judge, appointed by the Judicial Council [non-voting]	TERM-027010	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/4/2028

No Seat ID was supplied for this entry. Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(4)(b) — the direct pairing to Vernice Trease's (4)(a) District Court Judge seat, both non-voting per the commission's own official roster. Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026), the same S.B. 323 “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). Term end (5/4/2028) is notably shorter than the 5/7/2026–5/6/2030 four-year cycle seen on most companion Sentencing Commission profiles in this series.

Background

Presiding Judge, Sixth District Juvenile Court, appointed by Gov. Gary R. Herbert in December 2017; serves Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield, and Kane Counties (utcourts.gov). B.A., Brigham Young University, 2000; J.D., University of Nebraska, 2003. Deputy Sanpete County Attorney, 2003–2010, then elected Sanpete County Attorney until his 2017 appointment. Chaired the Utah County and District Attorneys Association (Nov. 2012–Nov. 2013) and the Utah Indigent Defense Funds Board (Apr. 2013 until his appointment). Served on the Attorney General's Advisory Committee and represented the Sixth District on the Utah Office for Victims of Crime Board. Played a central role in establishing the Sanpete County Children's Justice Center and directed its Victims Advocate Program. Instructor with the Utah Department of Corrections and adjunct professor of criminal law at Snow College.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Judge Brody L. Keisel is listed among virtual attendees at several 2026 General Session meetings, consistent with his confirmed non-voting seat on the commission. However, no comment, question, or other substantive contribution is attributed to him personally at any point in the material reviewed. His presence on the roster and in attendance listings is documented, but the record does not reflect any active engagement from him with the commission's deliberations.

Characterization

Keisel's Sentencing Commission profile is defined by attendance without visible participation across the meetings reviewed. Because his seat is non-voting, the practical consequence of that pattern differs from what it would be for a voting member, though the absence of any substantive contribution remains notable in its own right. Nothing in the record indicates whether this reflects a seat used purely to monitor proceedings, a lower institutional priority placed on speaking up, or simply the nature of a non-voting role that carries no obligation to weigh in. As it stands, his profile reflects an appointee who shows up but leaves no mark on the commission's substantive deliberations.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
N/A	Non-voting seat; no documented attendance or participation of any kind.	N/A — non-voting

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Blake Murdoch

*Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services (JJYS) ·
Sentencing Commission, JJOC Chair/Designee Seat*

Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(c): the chair of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee, or a member of the JJOC designated by the chair	TERM-027008	Current — 5/1/2024 to 5/4/2028

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(4)(c), a distinct subsection from the (3)(b) professional-association seats and the (4) non-voting judicial seats covered by every other companion profile in this series. Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 (through at least July 1, 2026), the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). Note, JJOC's designee seat was voting under Title 63M through the General Session, and only became non-voting under §75E-4-102(4)(c) once the recodification took effect July 1, 2026 (the same HB274-driven change).

Background

Staff, Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services (JJYS). Directly documented working relationship with April Graham (JJYS Director, formerly Deputy Director, and already extensively profiled elsewhere in this series): per Utah Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Juvenile Procedure (May 5, 2023), Murdoch presented a proposed JJYS juvenile detention referral form to that committee. This places him in a JJYS staff role coordinating detention-referral procedure and form standardization across the state's juvenile courts, working under or alongside April Graham specifically.

Presence in the Meeting Record

No mention of Blake Murdoch himself is identified in any Sentencing Commission meeting or minutes reviewed, despite his listing on the commission's roster for the JJOC-designated seat. The seat's own qualification — "the chair of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee or a member of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee designated by the chair" — explains why: it is structurally designed to be exercised by a rotating designee rather than the named holder personally, the same pattern already documented for the Courts/AOC seat (Siaperas/Dreschel).

Exercised that way, the seat shows real, active engagement across the General Session: Sariah Donnahoo attends and votes under the seat's "(JJOC)" designation on January 22, February 12, and February 19, 2026, including an abstention on House Bill 116 and a support vote on House Bill 274, and Daniel Meza Rincon attends in the same capacity at the June 18, 2026 meeting. Unlike Dreschel's seat, where one consistent named proxy carries the seat every time, this one rotates between different designees over time, consistent with "member designated by the chair" rather than a single standing proxy relationship.

Characterization

Murdoch's Sentencing Commission profile is defined by a seat that is genuinely active, but never through Murdoch personally. That distinction matters: this is not a silent or inert seat comparable to the two non-voting judicial appointments elsewhere in this series, it produces real votes on substantive bills across most of the General Session, but the person named to it does not appear to be the one exercising it. The seat's own statutory language anticipates exactly this arrangement, designating either the JJOC chair or a chair-appointed member, so the pattern is consistent with how the seat was designed to function rather than a gap in Murdoch's own engagement. Whether Murdoch himself ever attends personally, or whether the seat is exercised entirely through rotating designees as a matter of course, is a genuine open question the record does not resolve, but "zero engagement" does not accurately describe the seat's documented history.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
H.B. 116 (mandatory fines, Jan 22 vote)	Designee (Sariah Donnahoo) abstained	One of two abstentions on the failed 3-9 "support in concept" motion
H.B. 274 (Sentencing Commission restructuring, 2/12)	Designee (Sariah Donnahoo) voted support	Among the 13 supports in the 13-0-1 vote
Unspecified (June 18, 2026 meeting)	Designee (Daniel Meza Rincon) attended	Not itemized beyond attendance

Cross-Commission Footprint

His relationship to CCJJ Commission is unresolved: there is a possible overlap with Daniel Meza Rincon's JJOC seat there, and it remains unclear whether these represent two distinct JJOC-designated seats or are otherwise related.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Chad Dotson

Iron County Attorney

Sentencing Commission, SWAP Rural Prosecutor Seat

Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(h): three criminal prosecutors, appointed by the Statewide Association of Public Attorneys and Prosecutors, with at least one being a criminal prosecutor in a rural county	TERM-028716	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(viii). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 — the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat is one of three criminal prosecuting attorneys under this subsection, with at least one required to be from a rural county — the qualifier Dotson's own seat satisfies as the Iron County appointee, alongside Ryan Robinson and Carl Hollan holding the other two prosecutor seats under the same paragraph.

Background

Iron County Attorney since 2019, based in Cedar City (ironcountyut.gov). Graduate of Southern Utah University; served in the Utah Army National Guard's "Triple Deuce" artillery unit, deploying to Iraq in 2011; J.D., University of South Dakota School of Law. His office has prosecuted complex homicide trials and child sexual abuse cases. This combination of military service and direct experience prosecuting serious violent and child-victim cases gives him a practical grounding in the kinds of cases most directly relevant to the commission's sentencing policy work.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Chad Dotson's Sentencing Commission seat shows no documented presence during the General Session covered by the meetings reviewed. His first appearance in the record is a June 18, 2026 self-introduction, in which he identifies himself as filling the newly created Rural Prosecutor position appointed by SWAP. He follows with a brief expression of enthusiasm for the appointment. Later in that same meeting, he is recorded participating in a roll-call vote under his own name, marking his first documented voting activity on the commission.

Characterization

Dotson's Sentencing Commission profile is that of a genuinely new appointee whose tenure has not yet produced an extensive record of substantive engagement, rather than a member whose absence reflects disengagement from an established role. His documented history begins with a self-introduction identifying him as the new Rural Prosecutor, followed shortly by his first recorded vote, marking the start of his seat's institutional history. Given his background prosecuting serious violent and child-victim cases, his eventual level of engagement with the commission may be worth revisiting once a fuller meeting record becomes available. As it stands, his profile reflects the early stage of a newly filled seat rather than an established pattern of participation.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
Unspecified (June 18, 2026 roll call)	Cast his first recorded vote at the same meeting as his self-introduction.	Not itemized — first vote on record, position not specified beyond participation

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Mike Smith

Sheriff, Utah County

Immediate Past President, Utah Sheriffs Association

Sentencing Commission, Sheriffs' Association Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(i): two representatives of the Utah Sheriffs Association, appointed by the Utah Sheriffs Association, with at least one being a representative of a sheriff from a rural county	TERM-028721	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(ix). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026, the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). The seat's text requires "at least one" of the two Sheriffs' Association seats to represent a rural county; Utah County, Smith's jurisdiction, is one of Utah's largest and most populous counties, not rural, suggesting his companion seat-holder (Chad Jensen, Cache County) is the one satisfying that specific qualifier.

Background

Sheriff, Utah County, elected 2018, currently serving his second term (utahcounty.gov; utahsheriffs.org). Over 30 years in law enforcement. Began his career at the Pleasant Grove Police Department as a patrol officer, later serving as a motor officer, detective, and internal affairs officer, and as a member of a joint criminal-apprehension team with the U.S. Marshal's Office. Eighteen years on the Utah County Metro SWAT Team, rising to Team Leader and Forward Operational Commander. Became Pleasant Grove's Chief of Police in 2012 before his 2018 election as Sheriff. Currently listed as Immediate Past President of the Utah Sheriffs Association. Associate degree in criminal justice, bachelor's degree in emergency management administration, and a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Mike Smith is one of the more substantively engaged members of the Sentencing Commission, regularly called on for his perspective and consistently offering informed, direct responses rather than deferring to others. He backs measures directly relevant to public safety and law enforcement operations, including the commission's approach to

emerging concerns around AI-generated exploitative material, and he is candid about his reasoning when he takes a more cautious position on a given measure. With decades on the Utah County Metro SWAT Team behind him, his input on operational questions reads as grounded in direct field experience rather than a purely policy-level view of how these measures play out.

Characterization

Smith exercises his seat with genuine substantive engagement rather than passive or routine attendance. His willingness to explain his reasoning, even when he holds back full support for a measure, suggests a member who takes the commission's deliberative process seriously. Combined with his consistent presence and direct responsiveness when called upon, his record indicates real, personal investment in the commission's work. That investment reads as consistent with someone who spent years leading his own association, accustomed to weighing in on policy questions as a matter of course rather than sitting back and letting others carry the discussion.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
911 emergency-reporting bill	Gave a substantive, informed answer working through the statute's definition of "emergency" when called on directly.	Engaged substantively; specific final position not separately recorded
HB 289 (AI-generated CSAM)	Support	Passed, 7 support / 6 abstain

The meeting transcript records Smith stating he would abstain on this bill pending further review, while the official minutes for the same meeting list him among the seven votes in support, a discrepancy between the two source records that this profile has not been able to independently resolve.

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission Member Profile

Brad Bishop

Chief of Police, Payson

President, Utah Chiefs of Police Association

Sentencing Commission, Police Chiefs' Association Seat



Commission Seat

Seat Designation	Term ID	Status / Term
(3)(j): one representative of the Utah Chiefs of Police Association, appointed by the Utah Chiefs of Police Association	TERM-028722	Current — 5/7/2026 to 5/6/2030

Statutory citation: Utah Code §75E-4-102(3)(b)(x). Post-recodification citation, effective July 1, 2026 — the same S.B. 323 "Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification" that renumbered CCJJ's evidence-based sex-offense mandate from §63M-7-204(z) to (y). This seat represents the Police Chiefs' Association's designated appointment to the commission, distinct from the two Sheriffs' Association seats held separately elsewhere on the body. Bishop's term is consistent with the Police Chiefs' Association seat being newly established by that restructuring rather than a renumbered continuation of a prior appointment.

Background

Chief of Police, Payson Police Department. Currently President of the Utah Chiefs of Police Association, the statewide leadership position for Utah's police chiefs, confirming him as the natural, senior pick for this commission's newly created Police Chiefs' Association seat. His statewide leadership role suggests his appointment reflects an intent to give the Association's collective institutional voice, rather than a single department's perspective, formal representation on the commission. Sworn in as Payson's Chief in January 2015 after previously serving as a Salem City Police Sergeant, succeeding retiring Chief Tom Runyan.

Presence in the Meeting Record

Brad Bishop is the Police Chiefs' Association's newly designated representative. As President of the Utah Chiefs of Police Association, his seat represents the Association's statewide leadership rather than a single department. He was not present for his introduction to the commission; the chair noted a scheduling mishap kept him away that day. His first documented appearance is the September 2 meeting, where he takes part in the discussion and votes with the majority on the commission's central guideline decision. No attendance or participation prior to that date is documented in the material reviewed.

Characterization

Bishop's profile is that of a newly seated member whose rocky start says little about his engagement once seated. Rather than a slow ramp-up, his record shows him stepping directly into substantive participation at his first real opportunity, aligning with the commission's majority on the year's most consequential decision. As the seat meant to carry the collective voice of police chiefs statewide, his first vote aligned with the 14-3 majority.

Key Votes / Position Record

Bill	Documented Position	Relative to Commission Outcome
— (June 18 introduction)	Announced but personally absent; no vote possible	N/A
Form 3, Option 1 (presumptive prison shading, Sept 2)	Personally present; voted Yes	Consistent with the 14-3 majority

Cross-Commission Footprint

No confirmed seat or activity was identified at another CCJJ-family body.

Sentencing Commission — Membership by Pattern

Drawn from the 20-member Sentencing Commission profile series

Institutional Leadership

Ryan Robinson (SWAP prosecutor seat, Chair) — the commission's most frequently mentioned figure since the June 2026 restructuring; runs meetings rather than simply attending.

Pam Vickrey (UACDL Juvenile Defense, Vice Chair) — chaired the commission through the entire H.B. 274 fight over her own profession's representation, then was moved to Vice Chair once the restructuring took effect; remained actively engaged throughout.

Consistently Active Members

Christina Zidow (Governor-appointed rehabilitation seat) — one of the most personally active members in the series; independently initiates procedural action rather than only reacting to others' motions.

April Graham (JJYS) — heavy, substantive presence consistent with her office's direct institutional stake in juvenile-adjacent sentencing questions.

Mike Smith (Sheriffs' Association) — genuinely active, regularly called on directly and consistently offering informed, candid responses rather than deferring to others.

Rich Mauro (UACDL Indigent Defense) — personally present for nearly all of the year's substantive decisions, and the rare member willing to stand apart from the room twice: once on the restructuring of the commission's own defense representation, once on the guideline overhaul that restructuring helped carry through.

Blake Hills (Board of Pardons) — personally present and engaged across the large majority of the commission's work, with only a couple of documented occasions where a designated colleague carried the seat in his place.

Stewart Young (AG designee) — personally present and engaged throughout, with one notable exception: the meeting that installed the commission's current chair, where a colleague stood in for him on that specific action.

New Appointees (H.B. 274 Rural Seats)

Lance Dean (UACDL Rural Defense) — active from his very first appearance, and willing to break from the majority at his next one; a meaningful early record for a seat with so little history behind it.

Chad Dotson (SWAP Rural Prosecutor) — active at his first appearance; further engagement not yet established.

Chad Jensen (Sheriffs' Association, Rural Seat) — new HB274 rural-sheriff appointment, first appearing at the June 18, 2026 introductions; active from the outset through the commission's later, higher-stakes meetings, including its central guideline decision.

Seats Carried Primarily by a Designee

Jared Garcia (Corrections) — every appearance by proxy, rotating among three different people with no apparent standing arrangement.

Neira Siaperas (Courts/AOC) — carried by the same colleague in the large majority of instances, personally present on one occasion.

Carl Hollan (SWAP prosecutor) — largely absent from this commission's own business, despite substantive legislative activity elsewhere.

Mixed Attendance

Solomon Oberg (VSC chair seat) — splits close to evenly between personal attendance and a designated colleague carrying the seat, a genuinely different pattern from members who show up personally as a matter of course.

Rare but Substantive Engagement

Vernice Trease (District Court Judge, non-voting) — largely absent from the visible record, but arrives partway through the commission's central guideline discussion to pose a question that goes to the heart of how presumptive prison should function from the bench.

Structurally Thin Regardless of Named Holder

Brody Keisel (Juvenile Court Judge, non-voting) — no engagement identified despite directly relevant credentials.

Blake Murdoch (JJOC designee) — no personal engagement identified, though the seat itself sees real activity through rotating designees acting in his name.

Explained Absence, Followed by Engagement

Brad Bishop (Police Chiefs' Association) — misses his own introduction due to a scheduling mishap the chair takes personal responsibility for, then shows up fully engaged and aligned with the majority the very next time his seat is exercised.

Transitional / Consolidated Role

Daniel Strong (Executive Director) — staff analyst before assuming the seat's formal voting role directly, inheriting Tom Ross's vote as part of a broader institutional bundle.

What the Sentencing Commission Membership Tells Us

Synthesis drawn from the 20-member Sentencing Commission profile series

Individual initiative matters more than formal position

Some of the commission's most substantively engaged members hold no special title at all: Christina Zidow and Mike Smith are among the most active voices documented, independently raising concerns and engaging directly with the substance of what's in front of them, while the commission's own Chair and Vice Chair are engaged but not the standout figures in the record. Real participation here does not appear to run primarily through leadership.

Attendance patterns vary within the same category

The commission's two Sheriffs' Association seats no longer illustrate a clean split between an absent seat-holder and an active one, both seat-holders turn out to be personally engaged, just concentrated in different stretches of the year. The sharper contrast now sits elsewhere: the commission's two non-voting judicial seats, created under identical statutory language, produce genuinely different outcomes in practice. One shows no engagement at all across the fuller record; the other, while similarly thin for most of the year, produces one substantive, well-timed contribution at exactly the moment the commission works through its central guideline decision. A seat category still depends heavily on who occupies it, and on when they choose to show up.

Some seats surface rarely, but not never

Rather than dividing cleanly into engaged and silent seats, the fuller picture shows a middle pattern: a seat that is quiet for the large majority of the year but produces a single, substantively significant contribution at a pivotal moment. That pattern complicates any simple claim that non-voting status, or infrequent attendance generally, discourages participation outright, it may instead mean that some members engage selectively, reserving their input for the moments they judge to matter most.

New appointments don't necessarily arrive in matched pairs

The two rural seats created by H.B. 274's restructuring, one for the defense bar, one for prosecutors, were filled by first-time appointees introduced at the identical meeting, and it would be easy to assume their early trajectories would look alike. They don't: one appointee breaks from the commission's majority at his very next appearance, on the year's most consequential decision, while the other's engagement beyond his first appearance remains unestablished. Shared timing at the start of a tenure doesn't predict a shared pattern of engagement afterward.

Institutional consequence and institutional continuity coexist

Pam Vickrey chaired the commission through a restructuring that reduced her own profession's representation, then was moved to Vice Chair once that restructuring took effect, a case of an individual absorbing the direct consequence of an institutional change. At the same time, Daniel Strong's transition from staff analyst to formal voting member shows continuity of institutional knowledge being folded directly into a voting seat, illustrating two very different ways individuals and institutional structure interact on this commission.

Taken together

The Sentencing Commission's membership shows a body where engagement is real but unevenly distributed, where formal titles do not reliably predict who actually drives deliberation, and where a seat's category alone does not determine whether, or when, it gets used. Individual initiative, and individual timing, appear to be more consistent explanations for who shapes this commission's work than institutional position by itself. The record also cautions against reading a quiet seat as a settled fact: several seats that looked entirely silent on an early pass turned out to hold at least one substantive, personally exercised contribution once the fuller picture came into view.

The Sentencing Commission: Broader Structure

Covering layers of the Sentencing Commission organization that sit outside the 20 statutory member seats.

1. Statutory Core

The Utah Sentencing Commission is created by Utah Code §75E-4-102, recodified effective July 1, 2026 from its prior citation at §63M-7-404 under S.B. 323, “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” (2026 General Session). Note this effective date differs from the Victim Services Commission's own recodification, which took effect July 1, 2026 under the same bill, suggesting S.B. 323 staggered effective dates across its own provisions rather than recodifying the full CCJJ family at once. The Sentencing Commission sits within the Department of Criminal Justice (DOCJ), one of three commissions in the same institutional family alongside the CCJJ Commission and the Victim Services Commission.

2. Commission Leadership

Role	Held By / Basis
Chair	Ryan Robinson — SWAP prosecutor seat; elected June 18, 2026
Vice Chair	Pam Vickrey — UACDL Juvenile Defense seat; elected the same meeting, after chairing the pre-restructuring commission

Both roles carry real procedural authority documented in the meeting record. Robinson runs and presides over the commission's meetings as the confirmed post-restructuring Chair. Vickrey's shift from Chair to Vice Chair coincided directly with the June 18, 2026 restructuring that reduced her own profession's representation on the commission, a documented consequence of the vote she had presided over, rather than a routine leadership transition.

3. Staff (Non-Voting Support Structure)

No staff roles specific to the Sentencing Commission, comparable to the Victim Services Commission's Director, Assistant, or Victims' Rights Coordinator positions, were independently confirmed in the material reviewed for this project. Daniel Strong served as the commission's staff analyst prior to July 1, 2026, before assuming the seat's formal voting role directly; whether a successor staff-analyst role now exists under his office is not confirmed. This is a genuine gap in the record reviewed, not a finding that no such staff exists.

4. The CCJJ-wide executive layer (effective July 1, 2026)

Following the CCJJ recodification, the Sentencing Commission's institutional oversight runs through DOCJ's executive structure rather than a body dedicated solely to sentencing policy:

- Dan Strong — Executive Director, Criminal Justice, DOCJ. Holds the voting seat for “the executive director of CCJJ or the executive director's designee” simultaneously at the Sentencing Commission, CCJJ Commission, and VSC — inherited from Tom Ross as a single bundle at the July 1 transition.
- Tyler Kotter — DPS Deputy Commissioner; exercises the Department of Public Safety's seat at the CCJJ Commission (and, per companion VSC research, at VSC as well), though a confirmed Sentencing Commission designee relationship for DPS specifically was not independently documented in the material reviewed.
- Whether Elizabeth Klc or Van Nguyen — both documented in adjacent roles at VSC — hold any comparable function at the Sentencing Commission is not confirmed.

5. Subcommittees

Aside from the Juvenile Subcommittee, no other subcommittee structure specific to the Sentencing Commission was identified in the material reviewed. The Sentencing Commission's own General Session and interim meetings, as documented, function as a single deliberative body handling all pending legislation directly, rather than routing bills through crime-type-specific subcommittees first. Whether informal working groups exist outside the official meetings reviewed cannot be determined from this material.

6. District-Level or Parallel Bodies

No parallel, district-level committee network comparable to other Commissions was identified for the Sentencing Commission in the material reviewed. The commission's own sentencing and release guidelines apply statewide rather than through district-specific implementing bodies.

7. The Sentencing Commission's Place in the CCJJ Family

The Sentencing Commission does not operate in isolation. Several individuals and structural patterns span all three CCJJ-family bodies:

- Dan Strong holds the executive-director voting seat at all three simultaneously.
- Michael Dreschel exercises the Courts/AOC seat at the Sentencing Commission and, separately, a different AOC principal's seat at CCJJ Commission.
- Blake Hills, April Graham, Stewart Young, and Solomon Oberg each hold seats at the Sentencing Commission that parallel or connect to seats they hold at CCJJ Commission or VSC.

This overlapping structure reflects the same underlying CCJJ recodification already documented for other Commissions: what were historically framed as three independent commissions increasingly function as three lanes of a single state agency (DOJ), sharing an executive director, overlapping designees, and coordinated legislative tracking.

8. External Research Input

No external research partnership specific to the Sentencing Commission, comparable to the University of Utah Criminal Justice Center's multi-part study feeding Victim Services Commission's 2027 legislative strategy, was identified in the material reviewed. Whether a parallel research or study process exists for the Sentencing Commission's own guideline development is not confirmed by this document.

