

# **Statement on Senate Bill 162 by Salt Lake County Council Chairman Richard Snelgrove February 19, 2019**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Sam Klemm here on behalf of Salt Lake County Councilman and Council Chairman Richard Snelgrove who would have liked to have been here but is out of town on business. It is my privilege in his behalf to endorse this bill and note that the County Council has voted unanimously to support the bill as well.

Salt Lake County, along with most of the other government entities that operate correctional facilities across the State, has experienced an acute shortage of persons willing to apply for the position of and are able to meet the standards of a correctional officer. Indeed, our correctional officers are given 16 hours of mandatory overtime per month just because we have slots we cannot fill. In addition, we have an entire pod of the Oxbow Jail that is closed because we cannot hire enough correctional officers to run it. Instead, we contract with other counties to take our inmates.

Other states have 19 as the minimum age for correctional officers and it seems to work for them. There is no doubt in Councilman Snelgrove's mind it would work just as well here. He understands the concept of having 21 as a minimum age for a regular patrol officer because they work much more independently. Correctional officers, however, work in a much more controlled and closely supervised environment. Therefore, he believes this adjustment would work well for us here in Utah.

By age 21 many young people have already chosen a direction in life. And, because the door to law enforcement is closed until that age, many of them have already selected something else. If that door were open at age 19, it is likely that we would be successful in recruiting more of them.

Therefore, in view of the compelling needs and reasoning heretofore expressed, Councilman Snelgrove encourages your support of this bill and again notes the unanimous endorsement of the same by the members of Salt Lake County Council.

Thank you.