

DATING APP FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT

UTAH HB 249
Rep. Stephen Handy

OBJECTIVE

This bill aims to reduce dating app-facilitated assaults and rape by empowering individuals with the ability to complete background checks through Utah Xchange, a public-records repository of district and justice court case information, for a nominal fee.

BACKGROUND

Meeting online is the most common form of initial connection for heterosexual adults (Rosenfeld et al., 2019).

LANGUAGE

This bill allows the Judicial Council, by rule, to allow public access to the Xchange database for a fee without having to pay a monthly subscription

RESEARCH

- Increase in strangulation, penetrative acts, and anogenital injuries in online dating app rapes indicate that violent sexual predators use apps as “hunting grounds” for victims.
- Males and individuals with mental illness using online dating apps appear to have increased vulnerability for online dating app rapes.
- Victims were more likely to be males, be university or college students, be younger age (mean of 24 years compared to 28 years), self-disclose mental illness or use of psychotropic medications, have documented anogenital injuries at SAFME, and have more anogenital injuries (1.69 injuries compared to 1.14 injuries).
- More likely to occur in car or house/apartment than outside, hotel or other location; involve strangulation of patient (27% of cases); use of condom by suspect; and involve two or more rape penetrative acts.
- Less likely to have drugs or alcohol consumed by patient and/or suspect.

(Valentine, Miles, Hamblin & Worthen 2020)

SOURCES

<https://le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/static/HB0249.html>