



Niskanen
Center



February 25, 2026

Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee
Utah State Capitol
350 State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

RE: Support for HB 137 – Violent Crime Clearance Rate Fund

Dear Members of the Utah Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee,

On behalf of Arnold Ventures, the Niskanen Center, and the R Street Institute, we write to express our strong support for HB 137, which would create a Violent Crime Clearance Rate Fund to help Utah's law enforcement agencies solve more violent crimes. We commend Representative Clancy for introducing this legislation, and we thank Senator McKell and Representative Mauga for their leadership on this issue.

Our organizations are united in the conviction that public safety is a core responsibility of government, and we share a common commitment to evidence-based criminal justice policy. It is in that spirit that we jointly endorse HB 137.

Utah is one of the safer states in the nation, but since 2019, its violent crime clearance rate has hovered around 53 percent. That means nearly half of all violent crimes committed in Utah result in no arrest and no accountability. Even Utah's homicide clearance rate of 72 percent—well above the national average—leaves more than one in four murders unsolved. Behind each of those unsolved cases is a victim whose family has been denied justice.

Low clearance rates do not just fail victims, they generate more crime. Decades of research confirm that the most powerful deterrent to criminal behavior is the perceived certainty of apprehension. When would-be offenders see that violent crimes routinely go unsolved, they come to believe they can commit crimes with impunity. Improving clearance rates reverses that calculus. It deters crime by raising the expected cost of offending while avoiding expensive incarceration. This is crime prevention at its most efficient.

Unsolved cases are not a reflection of law enforcement apathy or incompetence. Law enforcement agencies across Utah work tirelessly to bring violent offenders to justice, but they face resource constraints that limit investigative capacity. The challenge is not effort; it is ensuring that the resources available to law enforcement match the urgency of their mission.

The evidence identifies specific investments that are most likely to improve clearance rates. For example, hiring, training, and retaining homicide detectives, violent crime investigators, and non-sworn crime analysts have been shown to improve outcomes. So has acquiring and upgrading forensic technology and investigative equipment; as well as providing critical support to victims, families, and witnesses to encourage cooperation with investigations. HB 137 is designed to fund precisely these categories of investment.

Critically, HB 137 does more than allocate resources. The fund is structured to reach departments of all sizes across both urban and rural jurisdictions, and its grant framework is designed to allow researchers to conduct rigorous evaluations of the policies and practices that prove most effective. This means Utah will not only invest in solving more crimes today, but will also build an evidence base for identifying and scaling best practices statewide. That combination of immediate impact and long-term learning is what distinguishes HB 137 from a simple spending measure.

Utah has an opportunity to lead the nation in demonstrating that smart, evidence-based investment in investigative capacity can make communities safer. Our organizations strongly urge the Legislature to pass HB 137 and send it to the Governor's desk.

Respectfully,

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Arnold Ventures

Jason Olin
Senior Government Affairs Manager, Criminal Justice
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Jillian Snider
Resident Senior Fellow, Criminal Justice & Civil Liberties
R Street Institute