



LEGISLATIVE
AUDITOR
GENERAL

Heard in the Law
Enforcement
and Criminal Justice
Interim
Committee meeting on
9-16-26.

A Performance Audit of the Salt Lake County Jail

The Impact of Insufficient Jail Capacity on Criminal Justice Outcomes

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee
September 16, 2026



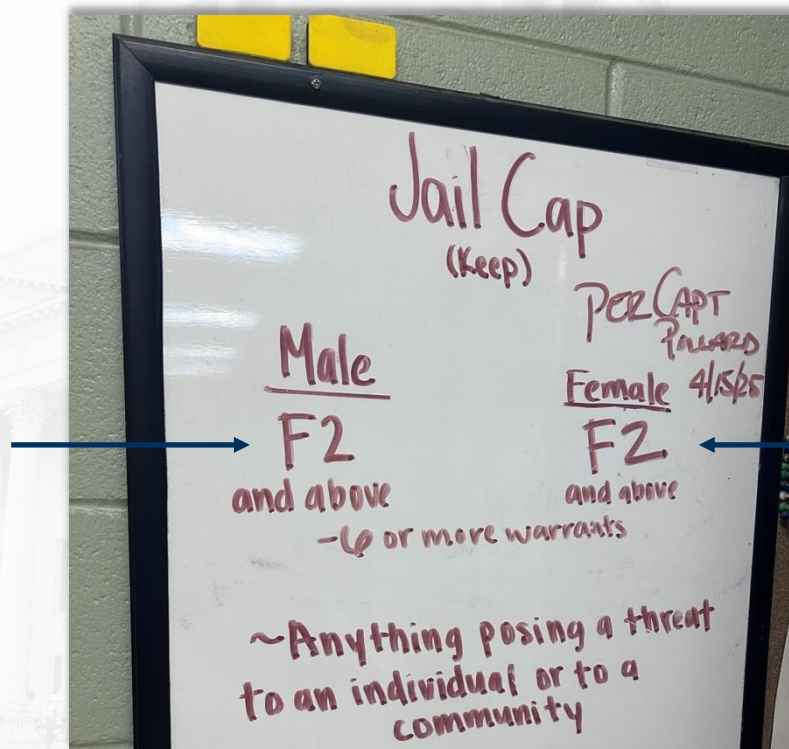
Chapter 1

Salt Lake County's Inaction on Jail Expansion Weakened Efforts to Maintain Public Safety

The Salt Lake County Jail Has Not Had Sufficient Jail Capacity For the Past Two Decades

100,000+

Number of
overcrowding
releases since
2007



1,785

Overcrowding
releases in
2025

Photo from Salt Lake County Jail.



Offender A: Public Safety Illustration

Violent history:
aggravated assault,
domestic violence,
robbery, unlawful
detention, and other
charges.

Booked on 4 new
misdemeanors.

Overcrowding
released after 8
hours.

Threatened a
vehicle owner with a
knife and fled from
police.

October 2024 – March 2025



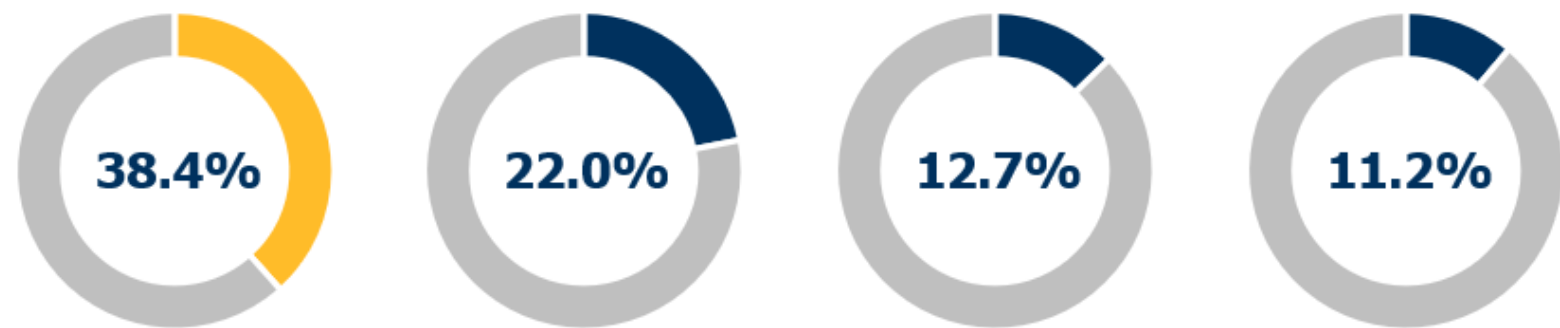
April 15, 2025



April 30, 2025

Overcrowding Releases are Linked to Frequent and Sometimes More Severe Reoffending

Rates of Reoffense by Jail Release Type



Number of Jail Releases

Overcrowding
Release Outcomes

1,785

Judge-Ordered
Release Outcomes

3,722

Bail & Bond Release
Outcomes

1,332

Pretrial Screening
Release Outcomes

1,490

Percentage who
reoffend with a 1st
or 2nd degree felony
after release

2.7%

2.0%

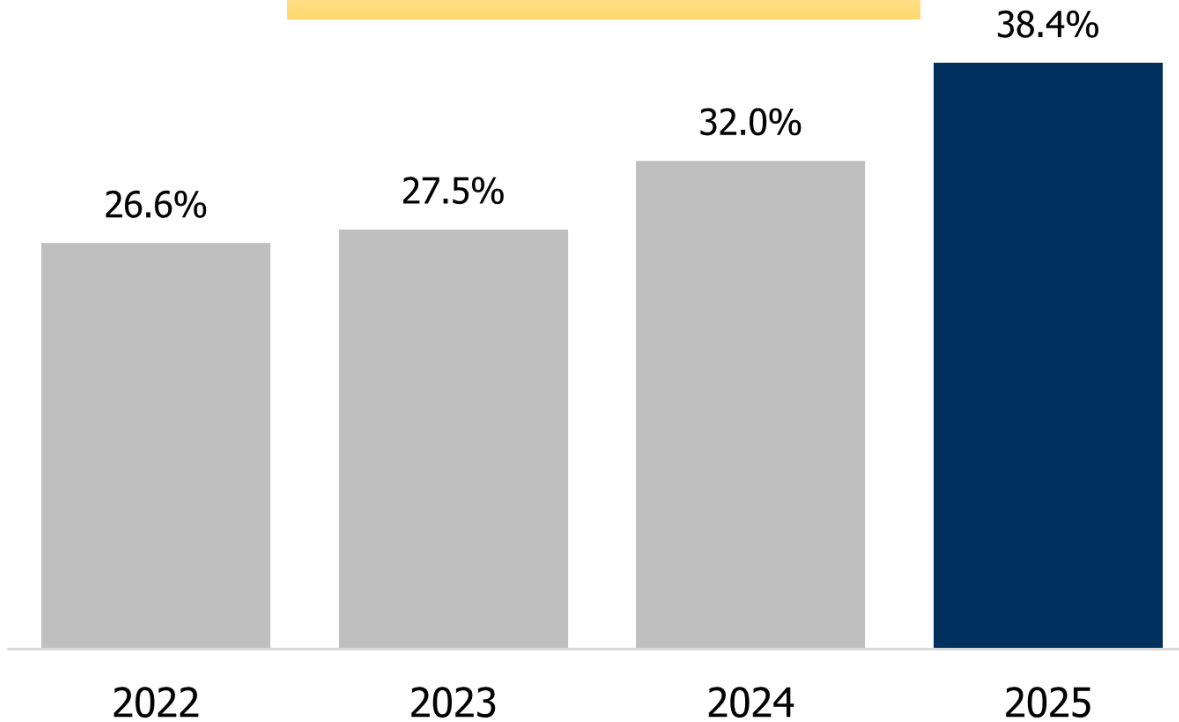
1.9%

0.9%



Reoffense Rates Are Rising After Overcrowding Releases

Reoffense Rate Within 90 Days
Of Overcrowding Release



These represent new charges incurred shortly after overcrowding releases.

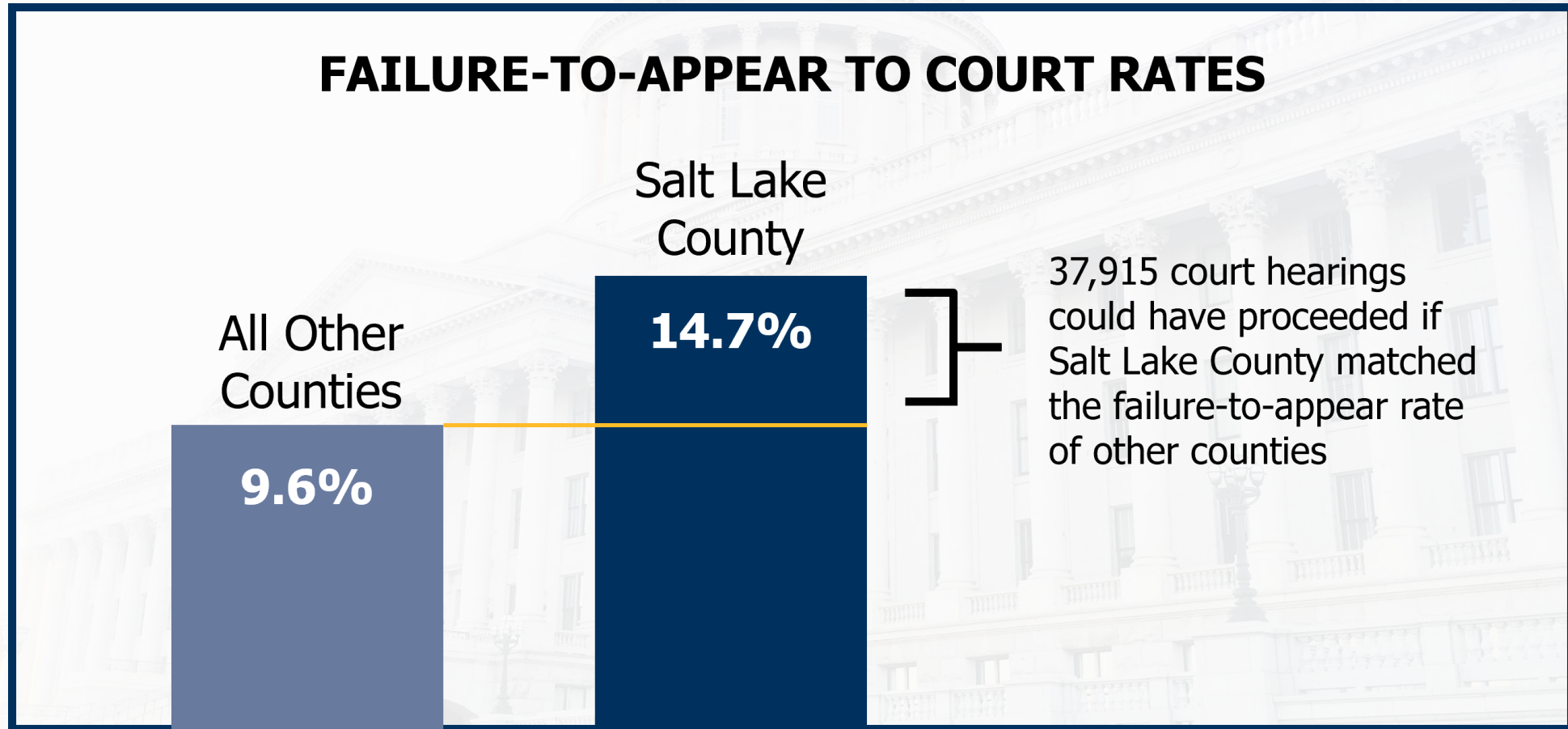


Chapter 2

Insufficient Jail Capacity Burdens Salt Lake County's Criminal Justice System

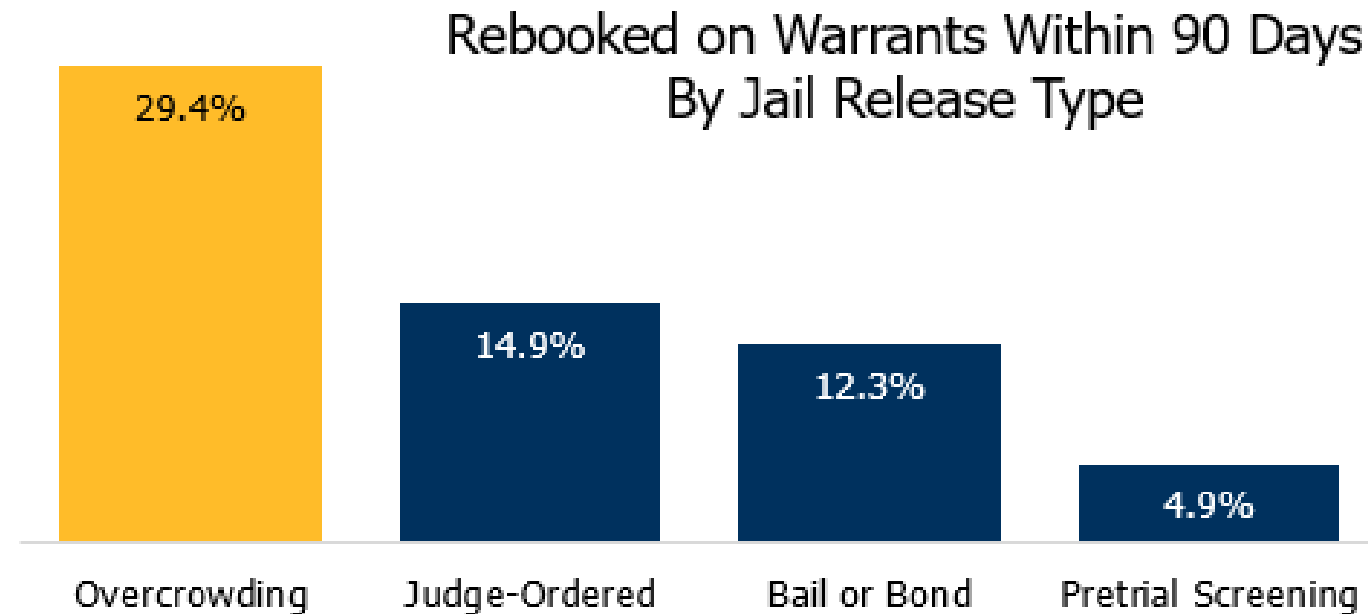


Overcrowding Contributed to More Defendants Failing to Appear in Court





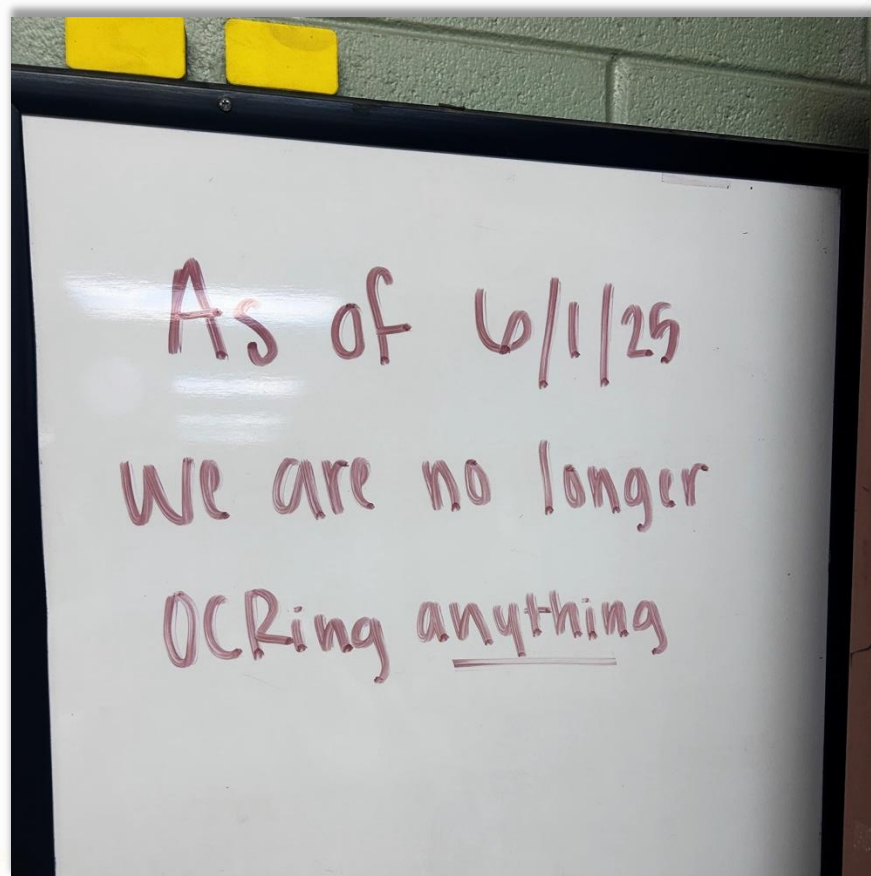
Many Individuals Released on Overcrowding are Rebooked on Warrants



This represents non-compliance with conditions of the jail release.



Legislative Action Prompted Salt Lake County to Stop Overcrowding Releases



- County re-opened and filled final housing pod at the Oxbow Jail
- Capacity increase still necessary for long-term solution



Chapter 3

Salt Lake County Has Not Made Jail Capacity a Priority



Population Growth and Crime Rates Should Be Considered



Salt Lake County grew by 300,000 residents since the last jail bed was constructed.

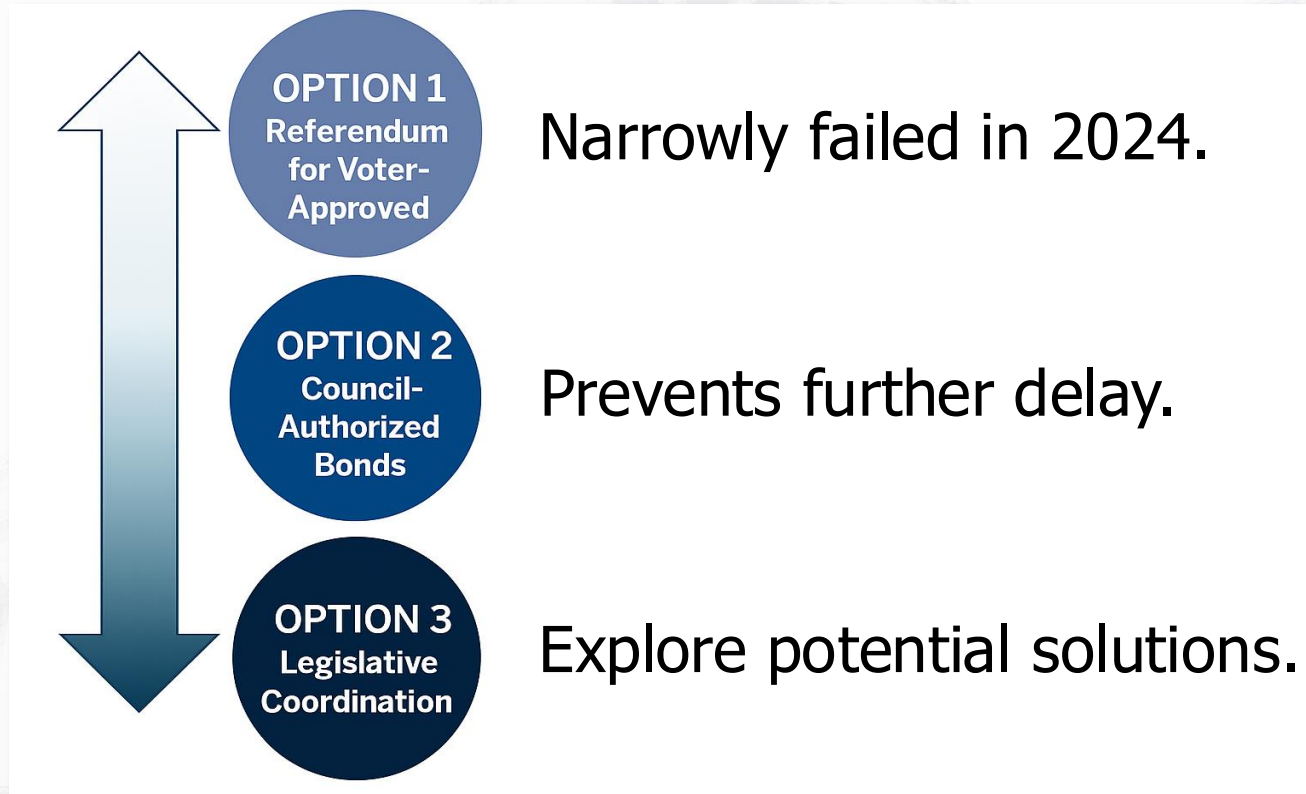


That's more than the population of Weber County, which has 888 jail beds.

Salt Lake County's crime rate is 69 percent higher than the rest of the state.



Salt Lake County and the Legislature Could Consider Multiple Options





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