

1 **ATTORNEY GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY AMENDMENTS**

2 2018 GENERAL SESSION

3 STATE OF UTAH

4 **Chief Sponsor: Merrill F. Nelson**

5 Senate Sponsor: Lyle W. Hillyard

7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

9 This bill addresses the attorney general's constitutional duty to provide advice and
10 representation.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12 This bill:

13 ▶ amends the time in which the attorney general must respond to a certain request for
14 the attorney general's opinion;

15 ▶ requires the attorney general to comply in good faith with the duty to provide the
16 required opinion;

17 ▶ allows the Legislature to petition the Utah Supreme Court to obtain the required
18 opinion if the attorney general does not provide the opinion;

19 ▶ requires the attorney general to eliminate potential conflicts of interest through
20 confidentiality and screening procedures;

21 ▶ clarifies the attorney general's relationship with potentially adverse clients; and

22 ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

23 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

24 None

25 **Other Special Clauses:**

26 None

27 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**



28 AMENDS:

29 **67-5-1**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2017, Chapters 295 and 387

30 ENACTS:

31 **67-5-1.1**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

33 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

34 Section 1. Section **67-5-1** is amended to read:

35 **67-5-1. General duties.**

36 The attorney general shall:

37 (1) perform all duties in a manner consistent with the attorney-client relationship under
38 Section **67-5-17**;

39 (2) except as provided in Sections **10-3-928** and **17-18a-403**, attend the Supreme Court
40 and the Court of Appeals of this state, and all courts of the United States, and prosecute or
41 defend all causes to which the state or any officer, board, or commission of the state in an
42 official capacity is a party, and take charge, as attorney, of all civil legal matters in which the
43 state is interested;

44 (3) after judgment on any cause referred to in Subsection (2), direct the issuance of
45 process as necessary to execute the judgment;

46 (4) account for, and pay over to the proper officer, all money that comes into the
47 attorney general's possession that belongs to the state;

48 (5) keep a file of all cases in which the attorney general is required to appear, including
49 any documents and papers showing the court in which the cases have been instituted and tried,
50 and whether they are civil or criminal, and:

51 (a) if civil, the nature of the demand, the stage of proceedings, and, when prosecuted to
52 judgment, a memorandum of the judgment and of any process issued if satisfied, and if not
53 satisfied, documentation of the return of the sheriff;

54 (b) if criminal, the nature of the crime, the mode of prosecution, the stage of
55 proceedings, and, when prosecuted to sentence, a memorandum of the sentence and of the
56 execution, if the sentence has been executed, and, if not executed, the reason for the delay or
57 prevention; and

58 (c) deliver this information to the attorney general's successor in office;

59 (6) exercise supervisory powers over the district and county attorneys of the state in all
60 matters pertaining to the duties of their offices, and from time to time require of them reports of
61 the condition of public business entrusted to their charge;

62 (7) give the attorney general's opinion in writing and without fee upon any question of
63 law relating to the office of the requester:

64 (a) (i) in accordance with Section 67-5-1.1, to the Legislature or either house [~~and~~];

65 (ii) to any state officer, board, or commission[~~;~~]; and

66 (iii) to any county attorney or district attorney[~~when required, upon any question of~~
67 ~~law relating to their respective offices~~]; and

68 (b) by a date upon which the attorney general and the requester agree, not to exceed 30
69 days after the day on which the requester makes the request for the attorney general's opinion;

70 (8) when required by the public service or directed by the governor, assist any county,
71 district, or city attorney in the discharge of county, district, or city attorney's duties;

72 (9) purchase in the name of the state, under the direction of the state Board of
73 Examiners, any property offered for sale under execution issued upon judgments in favor of or
74 for the use of the state, and enter satisfaction in whole or in part of the judgments as the
75 consideration of the purchases;

76 (10) when the property of a judgment debtor in any judgment mentioned in Subsection
77 (9) has been sold under a prior judgment, or is subject to any judgment, lien, or encumbrance
78 taking precedence of the judgment in favor of the state, redeem the property, under the
79 direction of the state Board of Examiners, from the prior judgment, lien, or encumbrance, and
80 pay all money necessary for the redemption, upon the order of the state Board of Examiners,
81 out of any money appropriated for these purposes;

82 (11) when in the attorney general's opinion it is necessary for the collection or
83 enforcement of any judgment, institute and prosecute on behalf of the state any action or
84 proceeding necessary to set aside and annul all conveyances fraudulently made by the judgment
85 debtors, and pay the cost necessary to the prosecution, when allowed by the state Board of
86 Examiners, out of any money not otherwise appropriated;

87 (12) discharge the duties of a member of all official boards of which the attorney
88 general is or may be made a member by the Utah Constitution or by the laws of the state, and
89 other duties prescribed by law;

90 (13) institute and prosecute proper proceedings in any court of the state or of the
91 United States to restrain and enjoin corporations organized under the laws of this or any other
92 state or territory from acting illegally or in excess of their corporate powers or contrary to
93 public policy, and in proper cases forfeit their corporate franchises, dissolve the corporations,
94 and wind up their affairs;

95 (14) institute investigations for the recovery of all real or personal property that may
96 have escheated or should escheat to the state, and for that purpose, subpoena any persons
97 before any of the district courts to answer inquiries and render accounts concerning any
98 property, examine all books and papers of any corporations, and when any real or personal
99 property is discovered that should escheat to the state, institute suit in the district court of the
100 county where the property is situated for its recovery, and escheat that property to the state;

101 (15) administer the Children's Justice Center as a program to be implemented in
102 various counties pursuant to Sections 67-5b-101 through 67-5b-107;

103 (16) assist the Constitutional Defense Council as provided in Title 63C, Chapter 4a,
104 Constitutional and Federalism Defense Act;

105 (17) pursue any appropriate legal action to implement the state's public lands policy
106 established in Section 63C-4a-103;

107 (18) investigate and prosecute violations of all applicable state laws relating to fraud in
108 connection with the state Medicaid program and any other medical assistance program
109 administered by the state, including violations of Title 26, Chapter 20, Utah False Claims Act;

110 (19) investigate and prosecute complaints of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of patients
111 at:

112 (a) health care facilities that receive payments under the state Medicaid program; and

113 (b) board and care facilities, as defined in the federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C.
114 Sec. 1396b(q)(4)(B), regardless of the source of payment to the board and care facility;

115 (20) (a) report at least twice per year to the Legislative Management Committee on any
116 pending or anticipated lawsuits, other than eminent domain lawsuits, that might:

117 (i) cost the state more than \$500,000; or

118 (ii) require the state to take legally binding action that would cost more than \$500,000
119 to implement; and

120 (b) if the meeting is closed, include an estimate of the state's potential financial or other

121 legal exposure in that report;

122 (21) (a) submit a written report to the committees described in Subsection (21)(b) that
123 summarizes the status and progress of any lawsuits that challenge the constitutionality of state
124 law that were pending at the time the attorney general submitted the attorney general's last
125 report under this Subsection (21), including any:

126 (i) settlements reached;

127 (ii) consent decrees entered; or

128 (iii) judgments issued; and

129 (b) at least 30 days before the Legislature's May and November interim meetings,
130 submit the report described in Subsection (21)(a) to:

131 (i) the Legislative Management Committee;

132 (ii) the Judiciary Interim Committee; and

133 (iii) the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee;

134 (22) if the attorney general operates the Office of the Attorney General or any portion
135 of the Office of the Attorney General as an internal service fund agency in accordance with
136 Section 67-5-4, submit to the rate committee established in Section 67-5-34:

137 (a) a proposed rate and fee schedule in accordance with Subsection 67-5-34(4); and

138 (b) any other information or analysis requested by the rate committee; and

139 (23) before the end of each calendar year, create an annual performance report for the
140 Office of the Attorney General and post the report on the attorney general's website.

141 Section 2. Section 67-5-1.1 is enacted to read:

142 **67-5-1.1. Written opinion to the Legislature -- Rebuttable presumption.**

143 (1) When the Legislature or either house requests the attorney general's written legal
144 opinion in accordance with Subsection 67-5-1(7):

145 (a) the attorney general shall comply in good faith with the requirement to provide the
146 opinion; and

147 (b) the Legislature or either house may petition the Utah Supreme Court to obtain the
148 legal opinion if the attorney general does not provide the opinion within the time period
149 described in Subsection 67-5-1(7)(b).

150 (2) (a) If providing the attorney general's opinion raises a potential conflict of interest,
151 the attorney general shall, as soon as practicable after the attorney general knows or should

152 reasonably know of the potential conflict:
153 (i) ensure that the attorney general's office provides each entity or individual involved
154 in the potential conflict competent, privileged, and objective advice or representation by
155 establishing:
156 (A) confidentiality procedures; and
157 (B) staffing divisions or other structural or administrative safeguards to screen
158 attorneys participating in the preparation of the attorney general's opinion from participation on
159 behalf of any other entity or individual involved in the potential conflict; and
160 (ii) provide written notice to each entity or individual involved in the potential conflict
161 describing the screening procedures that the attorney general establishes.
162 (b) There is a presumption that reasonable compliance with Subsection (2)(a) satisfies
163 any ethical or professional obligation arising from the potential conflict of interest.
164 (c) There is a presumption that, with adequate screening safeguards and procedures in
165 place, the attorney general:
166 (i) has an attorney-client relationship with each entity or individual involved in the
167 potential conflict of interest; and
168 (ii) may not invoke the potential conflict of interest or attorney-client privilege as
169 grounds to withhold or refuse to provide the legal opinion described in Subsection (1).

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel