

**JOINT RESOLUTION AMENDING RULES OF CRIMINAL  
PROCEDURE ON APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL**

2022 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Todd D. Weiler**

House Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This joint resolution amends the Utah Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 8, regarding the appointment of counsel.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- ▶ amends the Utah Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 8, regarding the appointment of counsel in a capital case; and
- ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

**Special Clauses:**

This resolution provides a special effective date.

**Utah Rules of Criminal Procedure Affected:**

AMENDS:

**Rule 8**, Utah Code of Criminal Procedure

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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, two-thirds of all members elected to each of the two houses voting in favor thereof:*

As provided in Utah Constitution Article VIII, Section 4, the Legislature may amend rules of procedure and evidence adopted by the Utah Supreme Court upon a two-thirds vote of all members of both houses of the Legislature:



28 Section 1. **Rule 8**, Utah Code of Criminal Procedure is amended to read:

29 **Rule 8. Appointment of counsel.**

30 (a) **Right to counsel.** A defendant charged with a public offense has the right to  
31 self-representation, and if indigent, has the right to court-appointed counsel if the defendant  
32 faces any possibility of the deprivation of liberty.

33 (b) [~~Capital case qualifications~~] **Qualifications for aggravated murder case.**

34 (b) (1) In all cases in which counsel is appointed to represent an indigent defendant  
35 who is charged with an offense for [~~which the punishment may be death~~] aggravated murder,  
36 the court [~~shall~~] must:

37 (b) (1) (A) appoint two or more attorneys to represent such defendant [~~and shall~~]; and

38 (b) (1) (B) make a finding on the record based on the requirements set forth below that  
39 appointed counsel is competent in the trial of [~~capital~~] aggravated murder cases.

40 (b) (2) In making [~~its~~] the court's determination, the court [~~shall~~] must ensure that the  
41 experience of counsel who are under consideration for appointment have met the following  
42 minimum requirements:

43 [~~(b)(1)~~] (b) (2) (A) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have tried to verdict six  
44 felony cases within the past four years or twenty-five felony cases total;

45 (b) (2) (B) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have appeared as counsel or  
46 co-counsel in [~~a capital or~~] a felony homicide case which was tried to a jury and which went to  
47 final verdict;

48 [~~(b)(3)~~] (b) (2) (C) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have completed or  
49 taught within the past five years an approved continuing legal education course or courses at  
50 least eight hours of which deal, in substantial part, with the trial of [~~death penalty~~] homicide  
51 cases; and

52 [~~(b)(4)~~] (b) (2) (D) the experience of one of the appointed attorneys must total not less  
53 than five years in the active practice of law.

54 (c) [~~Capital case~~] **Aggravated murder case appointment considerations.** In making  
55 [~~its~~] the court's selection of attorneys for appointment in [~~a capital~~] an aggravated murder case,  
56 the court should also consider at least the following factors:

57 (c) (1) whether one or more of the attorneys under consideration have previously  
58 appeared as counsel or co-counsel in [~~a capital~~] an aggravated murder case;

59 (c) (2) the extent to which the attorneys under consideration have sufficient time and  
 60 support and can dedicate those resources to the representation of the defendant in the [capital]  
 61 aggravated murder case now pending before the court with undivided loyalty to the defendant;

62 (c) (3) the extent to which the attorneys under consideration have engaged in the active  
 63 practice of criminal law in the past five years;

64 (c) (4) the diligence, competency, the total workload, and ability of the attorneys being  
 65 considered; and

66 (c) (5) any other factor which may be relevant to a determination that counsel to be  
 67 appointed will fairly, efficiently and effectively provide representation to the defendant.

68 (d) ~~[Capital case]~~ **Aggravated murder appeals.**

69 (d) (1) In all cases where an indigent defendant ~~[is sentenced to death]~~ has been  
 70 convicted and sentenced for aggravated murder, the court ~~[shall]~~ must:

71 (d) (1) (A) appoint one or more attorneys to represent such defendant on appeal ~~[and~~  
 72 ~~shall]~~; and

73 (d) (1) (B) make a finding that counsel is competent in the appeal of [capital]  
 74 aggravated murder cases. ~~[To be found competent to represent on appeal persons sentenced to~~  
 75 ~~death, the combined experience of the appointed attorneys must meet the following~~  
 76 requirements:]

77 (d) (2) To be found competent to represent an indigent defendant convicted and  
 78 sentenced for aggravated murder on appeal:

79 ~~[(d)(1)]~~ (d) (2) (A) at least one [attorney] of the appointed attorneys must have served  
 80 as counsel in at least three felony appeals; and

81 ~~[(d)(2)]~~ (d) (2) (B) at least one [attorney] of the appointed attorneys must have  
 82 attended and completed within the past five years an approved continuing legal education  
 83 course which deals, in substantial part, with the trial or appeal of ~~[death penalty]~~ homicide  
 84 cases.

85 (e) **Post-conviction cases.**

86 (e) (1) In all cases in which counsel is appointed to represent an indigent petitioner  
 87 pursuant to Utah Code ~~[§ 78B-9-202(2)(a)]~~ section 78B-9-202, the court ~~[shall]~~ must:

88 (e) (1) (A) appoint one or more attorneys to represent such petitioner at post-conviction  
 89 trial and on post-conviction appeal ~~[and shall]~~; and

90            (e) (1) (B) make a finding that counsel is qualified to represent persons sentenced to  
91 death in post-conviction cases.

92            (e) (2) To be found qualified, the combined experience of the appointed attorneys must  
93 meet the following requirements:

94            ~~[(e)(1)]~~ (e) (2) (A) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have served as counsel  
95 in at least three felony or post-conviction appeals;

96            (e) (2) (B) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have appeared as counsel or  
97 co-counsel in a post-conviction case at the evidentiary hearing, on appeal, or otherwise  
98 demonstrated proficiency in the area of post-conviction litigation;

99            ~~[(e)(3)]~~ (e) (2) (C) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have attended and  
100 completed or taught within the past five years an approved continuing legal education course  
101 which dealt, in substantial part, with the trial and appeal of death penalty cases or with the  
102 prosecution or defense of post-conviction proceedings in death penalty cases;

103            ~~[(e)(4)]~~ (e) (2) (D) at least one of the appointed attorneys must have tried to judgment  
104 or verdict three civil jury or felony cases within the past four years or ten cases total; and

105            ~~[(e)(5)]~~ (e) (2) (E) the experience of at least one of the appointed attorneys must total  
106 not less than five years in the active practice of law.

107            (f) **Appointing from appellate roster.** When appointing counsel for an indigent  
108 defendant on appeal from a court of record, the court must select an attorney from the appellate  
109 roster maintained by the Board of Appellate Judges under rule 11-401 of the Utah Rules of  
110 Judicial Administration, subject to any exemptions established by that rule.

111            (g) **Noncompliance.** Mere noncompliance with this rule or failure to follow the  
112 guidelines set forth in this rule ~~[shall]~~ may not of itself be grounds for establishing that  
113 appointed counsel ineffectively represented the defendant at trial or on appeal.

114            (h) (1) Cost and ~~[attorneys']~~ attorney fees for appointed counsel ~~[shall]~~ must be paid as  
115 described in ~~[Chapter 22 of Title 78B]~~ Title 78B, Chapter 22, Indigent Defense Act, of the  
116 Utah Code.

117            (h) (2) Costs and ~~[attorneys]~~ attorney fees for post-conviction counsel ~~[shall]~~ must be  
118 paid pursuant to Utah Code ~~[§ 78B-9-202(2)(a)]~~ section 78B-9-202.

119            Section 2. **Effective date.**

120            This resolution takes effect upon approval by a constitutional two-thirds vote of all

121 members elected to each house.