

House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee

Date: 01/23/2026

Bill: 1st substitute HB 24 - Criminal Penalty Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Wilcox

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill addresses criminal penalties.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 1st substitute and House Amendment 1, both of which were adopted by the Committee. The substitute consolidates motor vehicle criminal offenses by repealing the offense of operating a vehicle without required security and increasing the penalty for failing to carry proof of that security from an infraction to a class C misdemeanor. The amendment corrects a drafting error. The Bill reduces the penalty for a first offense of operating a vehicle at a speed greater than 20 miles per hour but less than 29 miles per hour in a school zone from a class C misdemeanor to an infraction. If the operator exceeds that range or is a repeat offender, the penalty is increased, bringing the Code into alignment with current court practice. The Bill also raises the penalty for failing to have evidence of an owner's or operator's security from an infraction to a class C misdemeanor. However, if a person is insured but cannot produce proof at the time, they may go to court to have the violation removed. Both changes are intended to reduce the burden on the courts. The Statewide Association of Prosecutors ("SWAP") spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 24, as amended, passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute HB 79 - Governmental Immunity Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Gwynn

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill amends the Governmental Immunity Act of Utah.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 1st substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The substitute changes the retrospective operation date from November 1, 2021 to March 18, 1985, the date the provision was originally enacted. The sponsor explained that the Bill relates to a 1989 Utah Supreme Court decision. The Bill states that a governmental entity and its employees are immune from suit when responding to a disaster or potential disaster, or when providing emergency medical services as first responders. The sponsor emphasized that the Bill does not expand immunity, does not prevent individuals from seeking a remedy, and does not apply in

cases of gross negligence. The Bill further clarifies that immunity for providing emergency medical services is not limited to emergencies of a particular type.

The Professional Fire Fighters of Utah, the Utah League of Cities and Towns, the Utah Chiefs of Police Association, Rural EMS Representatives of Utah, and the Utah State Fire Chiefs Association spoke in support of the Bill, while the Utah Association for Justice spoke in opposition.

Yeas: 11

Nays: 0

N/V: 0

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 79, as amended, passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.