

House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee
02/13/2026

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 138 - Child Abuse Homicide Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Shepherd

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill addresses the offense of child abuse homicide.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the Bill, stating that it clarifies that an individual may be charged under the criminal offense of child abuse homicide if a child dies by suicide after being subjected to child abuse or child torture and the suicide is a direct or proximate result of the abuse or torture.

The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice ("CCJJ") spoke in support of the Bill. The Victim Services Commission also expressed support. A Committee member asked the Victim Services Commission representative how many cases of this nature occur annually. The representative stated that she did not have specific data but noted that Utah ranks among the top ten states for youth suicide and that the age of affected youth is decreasing. When asked how many suicides are directly related to abuse, she indicated that she did not have that statistic available. The Utah Legislative Watch and a member of the public with 50 years of law enforcement experience spoke in support.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 138 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute SB 19 - Digital Evidence Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Weiler

Floor Sponsor: Representative Wilcox

UASD Position: Track

This Bill concerns digital evidence examination of a mobile device.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the Bill, stating that it is intended to reduce the backlog and delays at the Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory ("RCFL"). The Bill requires local law enforcement agencies to conduct cellphone extractions and basic digital evidence processing within their own agencies or in coordination with neighboring agencies. The sponsor explained that this approach would allow the most complex cellphone and computer extractions to be prioritized and handled by the RCFL. The Bill does not impose fees or taxes on participating agencies.

The Statewide Association of Prosecutors and the Law Enforcement Legislative Committee expressed support. Representative Wilcox asked whether agencies have personnel trained in Cellebrite technology. Some agencies have trained personnel and perform cell phone extractions in-house. Any agency that lacks this capability may coordinate and contract with a neighboring agency that has the trained personnel and equipment.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st substitute SB 19 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.