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**Crime in Utah 2015-2025
A Ten-Year Statistical Analysis of
BCI Crime in Utah Reports (2015–2024) and
2025 NIBRS Dashboard Data**

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Office of
UTAH FOR RATIONAL SEX OFFENSE LAWS

Introduction

This document analyzes ten consecutive years of statewide crime data reported to the Utah Department of Public Safety’s Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI), covering reporting years 2015 through 2024, supplemented with preliminary 2025 figures drawn from BCI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Interactive Dashboard. The purpose is to establish, from the most authoritative law-enforcement-reported source available, the volume and trajectory of sex offenses known to Utah law enforcement, and to examine how that reported-offense data relates, and does not relate, to the 46 categories of “registrable offenses” currently codified at Utah Code § 53-29-202(1)(a).

The analysis draws exclusively on ten official BCI annual “Crime in Utah” reports (PDF publications for report years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024), the BCI NIBRS Interactive Dashboard (queried for calendar year 2025), and the current text of Utah Code Title 53, Chapter 29, Part 2. It is intended to function as a standalone reference document, independent of any particular organization’s advocacy position, though the analytical framing, distinguishing what crime statistics can and cannot tell us about registrable-offense policy, reflects choices made in service of policy-relevant clarity.

This document deliberately confines itself to a single, well-defined question, what BCI’s own reported-incident data shows over a ten-year span, rather than attempting a comprehensive accounting of sexual offending, prosecution, or registry outcomes in Utah. That narrower scope is a methodological choice, not an oversight: BCI is the authoritative source for the specific question this report asks, and answering it does not require, and should not be diluted by, data drawn from agencies that measure different stages of the criminal justice process. Readers seeking information about charging decisions, convictions, sentencing, or registry composition should treat this report as a foundation for, rather than a substitute for, that separate inquiry, which Section 6 and Section 7 address directly.

The intended audience for this report includes legislators, legislative staff, and policy researchers who require a neutral, source-traceable account of what the state’s own crime-reporting apparatus says before any policy argument is layered on top of it. Accordingly, every statistic presented in the sections that follow is attributed to a specific BCI publication or dashboard query, and every limitation BCI itself discloses about that data is carried forward into this report rather than smoothed over for narrative convenience. This

approach trades some rhetorical simplicity for durability: a reader checking any individual figure against the underlying BCI report should arrive at the same number, and a reader who disagrees with this report's framing should still be able to use its sourced data for their own independent analysis.

1.1 Why this comparison is harder than it looks

A naive reading might assume that BCI's reported "sex offense" figures and the registry's 46 statutory categories describe the same population of conduct. They do not, for three structural reasons developed throughout this report. First, BCI's NIBRS classification scheme was designed by the FBI for national crime comparability, not to mirror any state's registry statute; it groups offenses into a small number of standardized categories (rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, incest, statutory rape, human trafficking, kidnapping) that cut across Utah's registrable-offense list in uneven ways. Second, several entire categories of registrable conduct under § 53-29-202, sexual extortion, possession or distribution of apparent or obscene child sexual abuse material, voyeurism, sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult, aggravated exploitation of prostitution, are either folded into BCI's "Crimes Against Society" categories (where they are not broken out by statute) or are not separately enumerated in the public-facing NIBRS tables at all. Third, BCI data measures incidents reported to law enforcement, not convictions, not registry entries, and not unique offenders; a single offender can generate multiple incidents, and the overwhelming majority of registrable offenses never appear in BCI's sex-offense rows because they are charged, reduced, or dismissed before the registrable disposition is reached.

Where this report uses BCI figures to speak to registry-relevant questions, it flags the mapping problem explicitly rather than presenting an implied one-to-one correspondence that the data does not support.

These structural mismatches are not unique to Utah or to BCI; they are an inherent consequence of the fact that the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting and NIBRS programs were built to standardize crime measurement across thousands of jurisdictions with different criminal codes, not to track any single state's registry eligibility list. Utah's registrable-offense statute, by contrast, has been amended piecemeal across more than four decades by separate legislative actions, each responding to a specific concern at a specific moment, with no requirement that the resulting categories align with any particular crime-reporting taxonomy. The result is two well-constructed but independently designed systems whose categories were never intended to overlay onto one another cleanly, and this report's task is to make that lack of overlay explicit rather than to force an artificial alignment.

A further complication is that the two systems also operate on different units of analysis. BCI's NIBRS framework counts reported incidents and, within each incident, distinct offenses and victims, generating a number that can rise or fall based on charging patterns,

multi-victim incidents, or a single offender's conduct spanning several offense codes in one criminal episode. Utah's registry statute, by contrast, attaches to a convicted person, not to an incident or a charge, and a single registrable conviction may resolve what was originally reported as multiple incidents, or, conversely, a single reported incident may eventually yield no registrable conviction at all if charges are reduced to a non-registrable offense.

Because of this unit-of-analysis mismatch, even a hypothetically perfect statutory crosswalk between BCI's offense codes and § 53-29-202's 46 categories could not, by itself, convert an incident count into a registrant count; that conversion requires case-level adjudication data that lies entirely outside BCI's reporting architecture.

2. Data Sources and Methodology

This section establishes the evidentiary foundation for everything that follows. Because the statistical findings in Section 3 depend entirely on understanding which years of BCI data are statewide-comparable and which are not, this report treats methodology as a substantive finding in its own right rather than as a procedural formality to be skimmed past. A reader who skips this section risks misinterpreting Table 3.1 or Table 3.2 as a single continuous ten-year trend line, when in fact the data is better understood as two distinct, internally consistent series separated by a fundamental change in how Utah agencies report crime.

The four subsections that follow are organized to move from the general to the specific: Section 2.1 explains the nationwide reporting-format transition that makes pre- and post-2021 data structurally different; Section 2.2 explains precisely which Utah Code conduct is and is not captured within BCI's published sex-offense categories; Section 2.3 quantifies, year by year, exactly how much of the state each year's figures actually represent; and Section 2.4 sets out how this report resolves the resulting comparability problem by maintaining two parallel data series rather than a single blended trend line. A reader who absorbs only one idea from this section should take away that no single number in this report's Section 3 should be read in isolation from the coverage and definitional context attached to the year it describes.

2.1 The BCI reporting transition: Summary to NIBRS

Utah law enforcement agencies report crime data to BCI under the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Through 2020, Utah operated as a "hybrid" state: agencies could submit data in the legacy "Summary" format (which applies a hierarchy rule, counting only the single most serious offense in a multi-offense incident, and using older offense definitions) or in the modern National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) format, which counts every offense in an incident and uses more granular categories. Beginning January 1, 2021, BCI required all reporting agencies to submit exclusively in NIBRS format, and 2021 became the new statistical base year. BCI has stated explicitly that data from the NIBRS era is not directly comparable to pre-2021 Summary-format data, and that the

agency no longer maintains a traditional decade-spanning trend analysis in its post-2021 PDF reports, directing users instead to its online dashboard for trend purposes.

This transition has a material consequence for this report: the cleanest, most defensible apples-to-apples comparison available is the four-year span from 2021 through 2024, during which all reporting agencies used NIBRS and population coverage exceeded 96 percent in every year. Comparisons reaching back to 2015–2020 are presented as well, but with the coverage caveats that BCI itself attaches to each year, detailed in Section 2.3.

It is worth noting that this transition was a deliberate federal and state policy choice rather than an incidental change in BCI's recordkeeping practices. The FBI formally retired the legacy Summary Reporting System nationwide at the start of 2021, and Utah's adoption of full NIBRS reporting tracked that national timeline rather than reflecting any Utah-specific decision to alter how sex offenses in particular were counted. Other states underwent the same transition on similar timelines, which means the comparability problem this report navigates for Utah is a feature of nationwide UCR methodology rather than a Utah-specific data artifact, and any cross-state comparison drawing on pre- and post-2021 figures would face the identical limitation.

One further practical consequence of the transition is that BCI's own published reports changed shape alongside the data itself. Pre-2021 “Crime in Utah” reports include a Summary Analysis section presenting statewide year-over-year percentage changes, a feature that disappears from the 2021-and-later PDF reports entirely; those later reports instead direct readers to the online NIBRS Interactive Dashboard for trend exploration. This report draws on both formats precisely because they were not designed to be read together, the Summary Analysis pages are the only source for a full-coverage statewide pre-2021 trend, while the dashboard and post-2021 PDF reports are the only source for the more granular NIBRS offense-code detail used in Section 3.1. Relying on either format alone for the full ten-year span would have required either sacrificing offense-type granularity for the early years or fabricating a statewide trend for years BCI itself does not claim is statewide.

2.2 What BCI's “Sex Offenses” category actually counts

Across every NIBRS-era BCI report, the “Forcible Sex Offenses” total is the sum of four NIBRS offense codes: Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, and Fondling (forcible fondling). A separate “Non-Forcible Sex Offenses” total sums Incest and Statutory Rape. These six categories, plus Kidnapping/Abduction and the two Human Trafficking categories (Commercial Sex Acts and Involuntary Servitude), comprise the complete set of sex- and abduction-related offense counts BCI publishes in its standardized “Crimes Against Persons” tables. No other BCI table in the public PDF reports breaks out sexual-offense conduct by more granular statutory category; in particular, CSAM offenses are buried inside the “Pornography/Obscene Material” line of the “Crimes Against Society” section without separate counts, and sexual extortion, sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult, and voyeurism do not appear as distinct NIBRS line items at all in the public reports.

It follows from this structure that every figure in Section 3 of this report is, more precisely, a count of NIBRS offense-code occurrences rather than a count of Utah Code violations. The NIBRS “Rape” code, for instance, captures the underlying conduct element common to multiple distinct Utah statutes, ordinary rape, rape of a child, and the penetrative form of unlawful sexual activity with a minor all report under the same code despite carrying different elements, different victim-age thresholds, and different registration consequences under § 53-29-202. This report treats that aggregation as a known and disclosed limitation throughout rather than attempting to disaggregate NIBRS codes back into individual Utah statutes, a task that would require case-level court records rather than the summary incident counts BCI publishes.

This aggregation cuts in both directions and is worth stating plainly. On one hand, BCI’s six core sex-offense categories combine statutes that the registry treats as carrying meaningfully different consequences, which means a rise or fall in the NIBRS “Rape” count cannot be attributed to any single underlying statute without additional case-level information this report does not have access to. On the other hand, several registrable offenses with no NIBRS counterpart at all, sexual extortion under §§ 76-5b-205 and 76-5b-206, for example, are conduct that did not exist as a distinct statutory category until comparatively recently and may, in practice, be charged and recorded by reporting officers under a broader existing NIBRS code such as fondling or extortion generally, rather than appearing as a freestanding line item anywhere in BCI’s published tables. The practical effect is that some registrable conduct is likely embedded, uncounted as such, inside the aggregate totals this report does present, while other registrable conduct is excluded from those totals altogether; this report cannot determine from BCI’s public data alone which of those two situations applies to any specific statutory category.

2.3 Year-by-year coverage and comparability notes

Table 2.3 below summarizes, for each report year from 2015 through 2024, the proportion of Utah law enforcement agencies submitting NIBRS data, the corresponding population coverage, the prevailing reporting regime, and a plain-language comparability judgment drawn directly from BCI’s own stated caveats in each year’s report. The pattern that emerges is not a smooth, gradual transition but a sharp discontinuity: agency NIBRS participation climbed unevenly through the late 2010s before BCI mandated full statewide NIBRS adoption effective January 2021, at which point coverage jumped from a partial, non-statewide figure to a consistently statewide one. This discontinuity, more than any single year’s data, is the central methodological fact governing how this report’s two parallel series in Section 2.4 must be read.

Reading the table column by column rather than row by row also reveals a useful pattern: the “Agencies submitting NIBRS” and “Pop. covered” columns do not move in lockstep, because Utah’s largest population centers transitioned to NIBRS reporting earlier and more consistently than its smaller rural agencies. This explains why, for example, a year with a

comparatively modest percentage of reporting agencies can still show a relatively high population-coverage figure, the agencies still reporting in Summary format during the hybrid years tended to be smaller departments covering a disproportionately small share of the state's population. This asymmetry is precisely why this report relies on BCI's stated population-coverage percentage, rather than the simpler agency-count percentage, as the more meaningful comparability indicator wherever both are available for a given year.

Year	Agencies submitting NIBRS	Pop. covered (NIBRS)	Reporting regime	Comparability note
2024	137 of 144 (95.13%)	98.14%	Full NIBRS	Statewide-comparable; matches 2021–2023 methodology
2023	138 of 143 (96.5%)	99.76%	Full NIBRS	Statewide-comparable
2022	134 of 144 (93.05%)	99.26%	Full NIBRS	Statewide-comparable
2021	128 of 145 (88.27%)	96.48%	Full NIBRS (transition year)	Statewide-comparable but lowest agency count of the 2021–2024 span; several agencies submitted partial-year data
2020	112 of ~143 (78.32%) ≥ 1 mo. NIBRS; 12 Summary-only	94.59% (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid (final Summary year)	NOT statewide for NIBRS sex-offense tables, BCI states NIBRS figures for 2020 do not reflect statewide data. Statewide Summary-format trend (Sec. 2.4) is the only full-coverage figure
2019	90 of 145 (62.07%) NIBRS; 39 Summary; 16 non-reporting	80.94% (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid	NOT statewide for NIBRS sex-offense tables; same caveat as 2020
2018	Hybrid mix, NIBRS minority of agencies	Partial (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid	NIBRS sex-offense detail not statewide; Summary trend data used instead

(Sexual Exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult), §76-5b-204.1 (Aggravated Sexual Extortion, covered under §76-5b-204), and all five new trafficking and smuggling statute numbers (§§76-5-308.6, 310.2, 312, 316, 317, covered under predecessor designations), are present in the court records and documented in the coverage table maintained in the internal analytical record.

Year	Agencies submitting NIBRS	Pop. covered (NIBRS)	Reporting regime	Comparability note
2017	71 of 141 (50.35%) NIBRS; 54 Summary; 16 non-reporting	75.37% (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid	NIBRS sex-offense detail not statewide; Summary trend data used instead
2016	Hybrid mix, NIBRS minority of agencies	Partial (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid	NIBRS sex-offense detail not statewide; Summary trend data used instead
2015	Hybrid mix, NIBRS minority of agencies	Partial (NIBRS agencies)	Hybrid	NIBRS sex-offense detail not statewide; Summary trend data used instead

Source: each year's BCI "Crime in Utah" report, Introduction and Non-Participating Agencies sections.

Two implications follow from this table. First, any apparent year-over-year change that straddles the 2020-to-2021 boundary should be treated with particular caution, since a portion of any measured increase in NIBRS-reported sex offenses between those years is mechanically attributable to a near-doubling of statewide population coverage rather than to a genuine change in offending or reporting behavior. Second, within the hybrid years of 2015 through 2020, the population-coverage percentages reported for NIBRS agencies are not directly comparable to one another either, since the specific set of agencies reporting in NIBRS format changed from year to year as individual departments transitioned at different times; a county fully covered by NIBRS reporting in 2019 may not have been covered the same way in 2017. This report does not attempt to smooth over that variability, and the reader should understand each row of Table 2.3 as describing a distinct reporting environment rather than a single steadily improving trend.

Taken together, the ten rows of Table 2.3 support a single overarching conclusion that governs the remainder of this report: only the 2021–2024 span meets a reasonable standard of full statewide comparability, and every statistic drawn from 2015–2020 should be understood as a statewide percentage-change figure rather than a granular, offense-type-specific incident count. This report does not treat that limitation as disqualifying, the pre-

2021 trend direction is still informative, and BCI's own Summary Analysis pages remain the authoritative statewide source for those years, but it does mean that any claim about the relative magnitude of, say, fondling versus rape incidents prior to 2021 would exceed what the underlying data can actually support, and this report makes no such claim.

2.4 Two parallel data series in this report

Because of the coverage problem just described, this report carries two distinct series rather than forcing a single misleading ten-year line:

- Series A, NIBRS detailed sex-offense counts, 2021–2024 (and 2025 dashboard data). This is the statistically rigorous, fully comparable series: full statewide NIBRS participation, consistent offense definitions, and the most granular breakdown by offense type (rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, incest, statutory rape).
- Series B, Summary-format statewide percentage changes, 2015–2020. For years before full NIBRS adoption, BCI's own "Summary Analysis" pages (built from 100-percent-coverage Summary-format data using the FBI hierarchy rule) report a year-over-year percentage change in the number of rapes statewide. This series sacrifices offense-type granularity (Summary "Rape" uses the older, narrower definition and does not separately break out sodomy, object rape, or fondling) but gains full population coverage and direct year-over-year comparability across the pre-2021 period.

Both series are reported transparently in Section 3, each with its own coverage and definitional caveats, rather than spliced into a single chart that would imply a precision the underlying data cannot support.

The decision to maintain two parallel series rather than constructing a single blended ten-year trend line reflects a judgment that transparency about data limitations is more valuable to a policy-relevant document than the visual simplicity of one continuous chart. A blended series would necessarily require assumptions, about how to weight partial-coverage years, how to convert legacy Summary-format rape counts into NIBRS-equivalent forcible-sex-offense totals, and how to treat agencies that switched reporting formats mid-period, that this report's authors are not in a position to make with confidence, and that BCI itself has declined to make in its own post-2021 publications. Presenting Series A and Series B side by side, with their incompatibilities stated plainly, allows the reader to draw conclusions appropriate to the actual quality of the underlying data rather than conclusions that appear more precise than the data supports.

This two-series structure also has a direct bearing on how Section 4's registrable-offense mapping should be read. Because Series A offers the only offense-type-granular data this report relies on, the NIBRS-to-registry mapping exercise in Section 4.2 is necessarily anchored to the 2021–2024 period; it cannot be meaningfully extended backward into the Series B years, since Series B's single statewide rape percentage-change figure contains no

information about sodomy, object rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape considered separately. Readers should therefore understand Section 4's coverage-gap findings as describing the most recent four years of data specifically, not the full ten-year span this report otherwise covers.

3. Ten-Year Statistical Findings

The findings in this section are presented in the two-series structure established in Section 2.4, beginning with the more rigorous and granular four-year NIBRS series before turning to the longer but less detailed Summary-format trend and, finally, to preliminary 2025 figures. Readers are encouraged to resist the temptation to read the section's subsections as a single chronological narrative running from 2015 to 2025; the methodological break at 2021 means that Section 3.1 and Section 3.2 describe two different measurement instruments applied to overlapping but not identical aspects of the same underlying phenomenon, and conclusions drawn from one should not be assumed to transfer automatically to the other.

Each subsection below follows the same internal structure: a presentation of the relevant BCI-sourced table, followed by a plain-language interpretation of what that table does and does not support, followed in most cases by an explicit caution about the most common way the data could be over-read. This structure is intentional. Sex-offense statistics are unusually prone to being cited selectively, a single year-over-year percentage can be quoted in isolation to support nearly any narrative depending on which year is chosen as the baseline, and this report's repeated practice of pairing every figure with its immediate caveat is meant to make that kind of selective citation harder to do honestly using this document as a source.

3.1 Series A: Full statewide NIBRS detail, 2021–2024

Table 3.1 presents the complete NIBRS “Crimes Against Persons” sex-offense breakdown for each year in which BCI achieved near-complete statewide NIBRS participation. These four years are directly comparable to one another.

These four years were selected as the report's primary analytical series precisely because they share a common reporting standard, a common offense taxonomy, and population coverage above 96 percent throughout, removing most of the confounding variables that complicate the longer Summary-format trend in Section 3.2. Within this four-year window, every offense category in Table 3.1 can be compared year over year with reasonable confidence that observed changes reflect actual shifts in reported incident volume rather than artifacts of which agencies happened to submit usable data in a given year.

Before turning to the table itself, it is worth previewing how it is organized: the ten offense rows are grouped into four categories BCI itself uses, the four individual forcible-offense codes followed by their combined total, the two individual non-forcible-offense codes followed by their combined total, and finally kidnapping/abduction and human trafficking

as two adjacent but analytically distinct categories that BCI tracks in the same Crimes Against Persons table without classifying either as a sex offense in the strict sense. This report preserves that grouping rather than reordering the rows by magnitude or by registry relevance, so that the table remains directly traceable back to BCI’s own published format for a reader checking the underlying source.

Offense	2021	2022	2023	2024
Rape	1,619	1,623	1,531	1,583
Sodomy	339	307	304	312
Sexual Assault with an Object	104	110	84	126
Fondling	2,837	2,977	2,919	2,941
Forcible Sex Offenses Total	4,899	5,017	4,838	4,962
Incest	25	15	20	14
Statutory Rape	156	118	86	87
Non-Forcible Sex Offenses Total	181	133	106	101
Kidnapping/Abduction	983	1,080	1,103	1,220
Human Trafficking (both categories)	54	33	43	59

Source: BCI “Crime in Utah” reports, 2021–2024, NIBRS Crimes Against Persons – Table Two, statewide totals row. 2021 reflects 96.48% population coverage; 2022–2024 reflect 99%+ coverage.

3.1.1 What the four-year trend shows

Forcible sex offenses (rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and fondling combined) moved from 4,899 in 2021 to 4,962 in 2024, a change of only 1.3 percent, essentially flat once component-level movement is examined. This near-zero net change masks offsetting movement rather than uniform stability. Fondling, the largest category by volume, rose from 2021 to 2022 before declining each following year (2,837 → 2,977 → 2,919 → 2,941), ending only modestly above its 2021 level. Rape followed a similar shape, rising slightly into 2022 before falling in 2023 and partially recovering in 2024 (1,619 → 1,623 → 1,531 →

1,583), a roughly 6 percent band with no clear direction. Sodomy and sexual assault with an object moved within narrower ranges (roughly 84–126 and 304–339), consistent with ordinary variation in smaller-count series, though object rape's 2023-to-2024 jump (84 to 126, up 50 percent on a small base) warrants caution against over-reading a single-year swing.

The non-forcible categories, incest and statutory rape, declined more clearly, from a combined 181 in 2021 to 101 in 2024 (44 percent). Statutory rape alone fell from 156 to 87. Kidnapping/abduction rose substantially (983 → 1,220, up 24 percent); human trafficking fluctuated narrowly between 33 and 59, too small a volume for percentage changes to be meaningful.

Taken together, these category-level patterns suggest that the four-year window does not describe a single, uniform trend in sexual offending but rather several distinct sub-trends moving in different directions at once: a flat-to-slightly-declining forcible-offense rate once participation effects and the 2022 peak are controlled for, a meaningfully declining non-forcible (age-based) offense rate, and a rising kidnapping rate that sits adjacent to, but is analytically separate from, the registry's sex-offender categories. Any summary statement about "sex offenses in Utah" that collapses these divergent sub-trends into one number obscures more than it reveals, which is why this report presents each category individually in Table 3.1 rather than relying solely on the combined Forcible and Non-Forcible totals.

Caution: because 2021 reflects lower agency participation than 2022–2024, the cleanest sub-comparison is 2022 versus 2024 (99%+ coverage both years), which shows forcible sex offenses falling from 5,017 to 4,962 (down 1.1%). Fondling declined 2,977 to 2,941 (down 1.2%) and rape declined 1,623 to 1,583 (down 2.5%), while sodomy rose modestly (up 1.6%) and sexual assault with an object rose sharply on a small base (up 14.5%). Non-forcible offenses continued declining and kidnapping continued rising over the same span. The most defensible full-coverage reading is general stability or mild decline in forcible sex offenses, not the growth a naive reading of the endpoints might suggest.

One additional pattern worth flagging is the relative stability of rape specifically, set against the more volatile movement in sexual assault with an object. Because rape carries the most severe registry consequences among the forcible categories and is also the category most frequently cited in public discussion of Utah's sex-offense rate, its narrow range across all four NIBRS years, never falling below 1,531 or rising above 1,623, together with its net decline from the 2022 peak, is itself a finding distinct from any impression of sustained growth a reader might otherwise take from the combined forcible total. A reader encountering only a combined total in isolation could reasonably but incorrectly infer that rape specifically was rising over the period; Table 3.1's category-level detail does not support that inference.

3.2 Series B: Statewide Summary-format trend, 2015–2020

For the years preceding full NIBRS adoption, BCI’s annual “Summary Analysis” section reports a single, full-population-coverage statistic: the year-over-year percentage change in the number of rapes statewide, calculated from Summary-format (hierarchy-rule) data submitted by all reporting agencies. This is the only true 100-percent-coverage rape figure available for these years; the parallel NIBRS tables in the same reports explicitly do not reflect statewide totals because, as Table 2.3 shows, well under two-thirds of agencies were NIBRS-only reporters before 2020.

Report year	Rape, year-over-year change (Summary, statewide)	Direction	Context from same year’s Summary Analysis
2020	–10.06%	Decrease	Rape was the only one of the four index violent-crime categories (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) to decrease in 2020; homicides rose 44.16%, robberies 5.78%, aggravated assault 2.70%.
2019	–1.57%	Decrease	Overall violent crime rose only 0.64%; homicides rose 11.59% and aggravated assault 3.61%, while robbery fell 7.79% alongside the small rape decline.
2018	Increase (BCI press materials report rape rising; precise statewide percentage not isolated in available source)	Increase	2018 report covered data from 130 agencies.
2017	Increase	Increase	DPS’s public release for the 2017 report states total index crimes fell 5.38% from 2016, “however, there was an increase in crimes involving a firearm, hate crimes and rape.”
2016	Not isolated in available source	—	—
2015	Not isolated in available source	—	—

Source: BCI “Crime in Utah” Summary Analysis sections, 2019 and 2020 reports (exact percentages); Utah DPS press releases for 2017 and 2018 report launches (directional confirmation only, exact percentage not located in available materials).

The available Series B data points to a rape count that rose in 2017 and again into 2018, then declined modestly in both 2019 and 2020, a pattern consistent with, though not identical to, the relatively flat-to-rising NIBRS-era rape counts documented in Series A for 2021–2024. Because Series B uses the legacy “Rape” definition (which, unlike the NIBRS “Forcible Sex Offenses” total, does not include sodomy, sexual assault with an object, or fondling), the two series are not numerically comparable and should be read as two different lenses on the same underlying phenomenon rather than as a single continuous line.

It is also worth noting what Series B cannot tell us. Because the Summary Analysis percentage-change figures BCI publishes describe only year-over-year direction and magnitude rather than absolute counts, this report cannot state a precise 2015 or 2016 rape total, nor can it construct a six-year cumulative percentage change for 2015–2020 by simply compounding the individual year-over-year figures, since rounding and definitional consistency across six successive Summary Analysis publications were not independently verified for this report. The pre-2021 trend should therefore be understood as directional evidence, useful for establishing that rape counts were not in uncontrolled escalation during the years immediately preceding the NIBRS transition, rather than as a precise numerical complement to Table 3.1.

It is also worth situating Series B against the broader index-crime context BCI itself provides for each of these years. In three of the four years for which this report could locate directional information (2019, 2020, and by implication 2017–2018 as a contrasting pair), rape’s movement did not simply track the other three index violent-crime categories, most notably in 2020, when rape was the sole index violent-crime category to decline while homicide, robbery, and aggravated assault all rose. This divergence suggests that whatever forces were driving the broader 2020 violent-crime pattern in Utah were not uniformly affecting rape reporting in the same way, a pattern this report does not attempt to explain but considers worth preserving in the record rather than collapsing into a single undifferentiated “violent crime” figure.

3.3 2025: preliminary dashboard data

BCI has not yet published the 2025 “Crime in Utah” PDF report; based on the publication cadence of prior years (the 2024 report was published in August 2025, roughly eight months after the close of the reporting year), the 2025 PDF report is expected around July 2026. In the interim, BCI’s NIBRS Interactive Dashboard, the same underlying data source, queried directly, allows a preliminary look at calendar year 2025. A dashboard query run in mid-May 2026, filtered to January 1 through December 31, 2025, across all counties, returned 5,141 total reported sex-offense incidents, summing the categories Fondling, Rape, .

Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Statutory Rape, Human Trafficking (both subtypes), and Incest.

Important methodological caveat: the 5,141 dashboard figure combines forcible and non-forcible sex-offense categories together with human trafficking into a single sum, whereas the PDF reports (Table 3.1, above) separate “Forcible Sex Offenses” from “Non-Forcible Sex Offenses” and report human trafficking as its own distinct category. The 5,141 figure is therefore not directly comparable, term for term, to the “Forcible Sex Offenses Total” rows in Table 3.1; it is best read as a single preliminary indicator that 2025’s combined sex-offense-related incident volume falls within the same general range established by 2022–2024 (forcible totals of roughly 5,000–6,200 plus non-forcible totals of roughly 100–135 plus human trafficking of roughly 30–60), pending the official 2025 PDF report and its standardized table format.

Until BCI publishes the finalized 2025 PDF report, this report treats the 5,141 figure as provisional in a second respect as well: dashboard data is subject to retroactive revision as agencies submit late or corrected incident records throughout the months following a calendar year’s close, in a way that finalized PDF report figures, audited and published months later, generally are not. A dashboard query run in a future month could plausibly return a modestly different total for the same 2025 calendar year than the 5,141 figure captured here in May 2026. This report’s use of the dashboard figure should be understood as a snapshot in time rather than a settled final count, and any reader relying on this figure for further analysis should verify it against the official 2025 PDF report once published.

Despite these caveats, the 5,141 figure is included here rather than omitted because a directional, even if imprecise, indication of 2025 volume is more useful to a policy-relevant reader than silence until the official report appears roughly a year after the relevant conduct occurred. Readers using this report in the interim before the 2025 PDF publication should treat any comparison between the 5,141 dashboard figure and the Table 3.1 totals as a rough order-of-magnitude check rather than a precise year-over-year calculation, and should re-derive that comparison once the finalized, standardized 2025 report is available.

4. Registrable Offenses Under Utah Code § 53-29-202

Utah Code § 53-29-202(1)(a), most recently amended by Chapter 330 of the 2026 General Session, enumerates 46 categories of conduct, items (i) through (xlvi), that make a convicted individual a “child abuse offender,” “sex offender,” or “kidnap offender” subject to registration on Utah’s Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry. Subsection (2) sorts those 46 categories into the three offender classes: items (i)–(ii) define child abuse offenders; items (iii)–(xxxvi) define sex offenders; and items (xxxvii)–(xlv) define kidnap offenders, with item (xlvi) operating as a catch-all for attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any felony-level offense in the preceding 45 categories.

This section shifts the report's focus from what BCI measures to what the registry statute requires, and the contrast between the two is the analytical core of this report. Section 3 established that BCI's incident-reporting architecture is organized around a small number of broad, FBI-defined offense codes. Section 4 now lays out, in full, the much longer and more granular list of conduct that Utah's Legislature has determined warrants registry placement, so that Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 can demonstrate precisely how much of that legislative list falls outside what BCI's reporting structure is capable of measuring.

The three subsections that follow proceed in a deliberate sequence. Section 4.1 first establishes, without reference to BCI at all, exactly what the registry statute itself requires, a necessary foundation, since no comparison to BCI's data can be meaningful until the statutory side of the comparison is stated completely and accurately. Section 4.2 then performs the cross-referencing exercise, mapping each BCI category to its closest statutory counterparts. Section 4.3 closes by quantifying, as precisely as the underlying categories allow, how much of the statutory list the BCI mapping in Section 4.2 leaves uncovered. Readers primarily interested in the bottom-line coverage-gap finding may wish to proceed directly to Section 4.3, though the full statutory list in Section 4.1 provides necessary context for understanding which specific categories that gap comprises.

4.1 The 46 registrable offense categories

Table 4.1 reproduces the full current statutory list, organized by the three offender classes BCI/DPS uses for registry administration.

The three offender classes are not of equal size or equal relevance to this report's BCI-based analysis. The sex offender class, at 34 items spanning (iii) through (xxxvi), constitutes the large majority of the statutory list and is the category most directly comparable to BCI's sex-offense NIBRS codes discussed in Section 4.2. The child abuse offender class, by contrast, contains only two items and addresses severe physical abuse and torture rather than sexual conduct, placing it largely outside the scope of BCI's sex-offense reporting categories altogether. The kidnap offender class occupies an intermediate position: while several of its component offenses (aggravated human trafficking, human smuggling) are sexual-exploitation-adjacent, the class as a whole is organized around the kidnapping and trafficking conduct elements rather than a sexual conduct element, and BCI's Kidnapping/Abduction NIBRS code, as Table 4.2 will show, captures a population broader than the registrable kidnap-offender subset.

Table 4.1 is presented in three parts, one for each offender class, rather than as a single 46-row table, both to mirror the statute's own internal organization in § 53-29-202(2) and to make each class's relative size immediately visible to the reader. Within each part, items are listed in the statute's own numbering order rather than alphabetically or by estimated incident volume, so that a reader cross-referencing against the statutory text itself can locate any given item without renumbering.

Child abuse offender, § 53-29-202(2)(a)

Item	Offense, statutory citation
(i)	Aggravated child abuse, § 76-5-109.2(3)(a) or (b)
(ii)	Child torture, § 76-5-109.4

Sex offender, § 53-29-202(2)(b)

Item	Offense, statutory citation
(iii)	Enticing a minor (felony or class A misdemeanor), § 76-5-417
(iv)	Sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult, § 76-5b-202
(v)	Human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, § 76-5-308.1
(vi)	Human trafficking of a child for commercial sexual exploitation, § 76-5-308.6
(vii)	Aggravated human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, § 76-5-310.2
(viii)	Human trafficking of a vulnerable adult for commercial sexual exploitation, § 76-5-312
(ix)	Unlawful sexual activity with a minor, § 76-5-401
(x)	Sexual abuse of a minor, § 76-5-401.1
(xi)	Unlawful sexual conduct with a 16 or 17 year old, § 76-5-401.2
(xii)	Rape, § 76-5-402
(xiii)	Rape of a child, § 76-5-402.1
(xiv)	Object rape, § 76-5-402.2
(xv)	Object rape of a child, § 76-5-402.3
(xvi)	Forcible sodomy (felony), § 76-5-403
(xvii)	Sodomy on a child, § 76-5-403.1
(xviii)	Forcible sexual abuse, § 76-5-404

Item	Offense, statutory citation
(xix)	Sexual abuse of a child, § 76-5-404.1
(xx)	Aggravated sexual abuse of a child, § 76-5-404.3
(xxi)	Aggravated sexual assault, § 76-5-405
(xxii)	Custodial sexual relations (victim under 18, offense on/after 5/10/2011), § 76-5-412
(xxiii)	Sexual exploitation of a minor, § 76-5b-201
(xxiv)	Aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor, § 76-5b-201.1
(xxv)	Sexual extortion, § 76-5b-204
(xxvi)	Aggravated sexual extortion, § 76-5b-204.1
(xxvii)	Possession of apparent child sexual abuse material, § 76-5b-207
(xxviii)	Distribution of apparent child sexual abuse material, § 76-5b-208
(xxix)	Unlawful activity regarding obscene material depicting sexual abuse of a minor, § 76-5b-209
(xxx)	Incest, § 76-7-102
(xxxi)	Lewdness, 4+ convictions, § 76-5-419
(xxxii)	Sexual battery, 4+ convictions, § 76-5-418
(xxxiii)	Combined lewdness + sexual battery convictions totaling 4 or more, §§ 76-5-419 & 76-5-418
(xxxiv)	Lewdness involving a child, § 76-5-420
(xxxv)	Voyeurism / recorded or photographed voyeurism / distribution of voyeurism images (felony or class A misdemeanor), §§ 76-12-306, -307, -308
(xxxvi)	Aggravated exploitation of prostitution, § 76-5d-208

Kidnap offender, § 53-29-202(2)(c)

Item	Offense, statutory citation
(xxxvii)	Kidnapping, non-parent offender, § 76-5-301(2)(c) or (d)
(xxxviii)	Child kidnapping, non-parent offender, § 76-5-301.1
(xxxix)	Aggravated kidnapping, non-parent offender, § 76-5-302
(xl)	Human trafficking for labor, non-parent offender, § 76-5-308
(xli)	Human trafficking of a child for labor, non-parent offender, § 76-5-308.5
(xlii)	Aggravated human trafficking for labor, non-parent offender, § 76-5-310
(xliii)	Human trafficking of a vulnerable adult for labor, non-parent offender, § 76-5-311
(xliv)	Human smuggling, non-parent offender, § 76-5-316
(xlv)	Aggravated human smuggling, non-parent offender, § 76-5-317

(xlv) Attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit a felony violation of any offense listed in (i) through (xlv) above. Source: Utah Code § 53-29-202, effective version as amended by Chapter 330, 2026 General Session (le.utah.gov, Title 53, Chapter 29, Part 2). Items (xxv), (xxvi), (xxvii)–(xxix), and the lewdness/sexual battery threshold provisions in (xxxi)–(xxxiii) were added or restructured in the 2025 and 2026 General Sessions; this list reflects the law in effect as of this report.

The statutory citations in Table 4.1 reflect a single point in time, the law as amended through the 2026 General Session, and the table itself is therefore a snapshot rather than a permanent reference. As the recent additions noted above illustrate, the Utah Legislature amends § 53-29-202 with some regularity, typically during each annual General Session, and items can be added, removed, renumbered, or have their elements modified from one session to the next. Any reader using this report’s analysis in a future legislative session should first verify the current statutory text against le.utah.gov rather than assuming Table 4.1 remains accurate indefinitely.

It is also worth noting that the sheer length of Table 4.1, once laid out in full, makes a point that summary descriptions of “the sex offender registry” often obscure: the statute does not describe a single, uniform category of conduct, but rather a wide range of offenses varying enormously in severity, victim age, use of force, and underlying conduct, from forcible

rape of a child at one end to a fourth lewdness conviction at the other. Any policy discussion that treats “registrable offenses” as a monolithic category risks eliding distinctions the Legislature itself drew deliberately into the statute's structure, and this report's full reproduction of the list in Table 4.1 is intended to make those distinctions visible rather than to flatten them in service of a simpler summary.

4.2 Mapping registrable offenses onto BCI’s NIBRS categories

Table 4.2 maps each of BCI’s reported NIBRS sex-offense categories to the registrable-offense items they most plausibly correspond to under Utah’s charging practice, and separately identifies which registrable categories have no NIBRS counterpart at all. This mapping is necessarily approximate: NIBRS categories are based on generic FBI definitions, not Utah’s specific criminal code sections, and a single Utah charge can be reported under more than one NIBRS code depending on the specific conduct alleged.

BCI NIBRS category	Approximate corresponding § 53-29-202 items	Mapping notes
Rape	(xii) Rape; (xiii) Rape of a child; (ix) Unlawful sexual activity with a minor (if penetrative)	NIBRS “Rape” uses the FBI’s revised, gender-neutral, penetration-based definition; Utah charges multiple distinct statutory rape-family offenses that all collapse into this single NIBRS bucket.
Sodomy	(xvi) Forcible sodomy; (xvii) Sodomy on a child	Two distinct registrable statutes (adult-victim vs. child-victim, with different registration lengths) both report under one NIBRS code.
Sexual Assault with an Object	(xiv) Object rape; (xv) Object rape of a child	Same collapsing effect as Sodomy, above.
Fondling	(xviii) Forcible sexual abuse; (xix) Sexual abuse of a child; (x) Sexual abuse of a minor; (xxi) portions of aggravated sexual assault	By far the largest-volume NIBRS category; corresponds to several distinct registrable statutes with different registration-length tiers (10-year vs. lifetime) that are statistically indistinguishable once reported as “fondling.”
Incest	(xxx) Incest	Direct one-to-one correspondence.
Statutory Rape	(ix) Unlawful sexual activity with a minor; (xi) Unlawful sexual conduct with a 16 or 17 year old	NIBRS “Statutory Rape” is non-forcible by definition and maps to Utah’s age-based (non-force) offenses specifically.

BCI NIBRS category	Approximate corresponding § 53-29-202 items	Mapping notes
Human Trafficking (Commercial Sex Acts / Involuntary Servitude)	(v)–(viii) human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation family; (xl)–(xlv) labor-trafficking/smuggling family (kidnap offender class)	NIBRS splits trafficking by sex-acts vs. servitude; Utah’s statute splits by victim category (general, child, vulnerable adult) and aggravation level, the two taxonomies do not align cleanly.
Kidnapping/Abduction	(xxxvii)–(xxxix) kidnapping family (kidnap offender class)	Utah’s registrable kidnapping offenses exclude parents of the child victim; NIBRS counts all kidnapping incidents regardless of offender-victim relationship, so the NIBRS figure is almost certainly an overcount relative to the registrable subset.
No NIBRS sex-offense equivalent	(iv) Sexual exploitation of vulnerable adult; (xxv)–(xxvi) sexual extortion/aggravated sexual extortion; (xxvii)–(xxix) CSAM possession/distribution/obscene-material offenses; (xxxi)–(xxxiv) lewdness/sexual battery family; (xxxv) voyeurism family; (xxxvi) aggravated exploitation of prostitution; (iii) felony/misdemeanor enticing a minor; (xxii) custodial sexual relations	These offenses are either absorbed into BCI’s undifferentiated “Pornography/Obscene Material” or “Prostitution Offenses” lines within Crimes Against Society (which are not broken out by specific statute), or have no distinct NIBRS Group A offense code at all. Their volume cannot be extracted from the public BCI reports.

The final row of Table 4.2, the registrable categories with no NIBRS sex-offense equivalent at all, is the most consequential entry in the table for purposes of this report’s overall argument, and Section 4.3 quantifies its implications directly. It is worth pausing here, however, to note that this absence is not evidence of legislative or administrative oversight on anyone’s part. NIBRS was finalized as a national reporting standard decades before several of the listed Utah offenses (sexual extortion, the CSAM possession and distribution offenses, the recodified sexual exploitation of a minor provisions) existed in

their current statutory form, and the FBI has not added corresponding offense codes for these more recently defined crimes. The gap documented in Table 4.2 is therefore a product of the reporting standard failing to keep pace with evolving criminal codes nationally, not a Utah-specific failure of data collection.

A further observation follows from comparing the “Mapping notes” column across the rows that do have a NIBRS counterpart: in nearly every case, the correspondence is many-to-one rather than one-to-one, with multiple distinct Utah statutes carrying different registration-length consequences collapsing into a single NIBRS code. This means that even Table 4.2’s seven “covered” categories do not give BCI’s data the ability to distinguish, for instance, a 10-year registration offense from a lifetime registration offense within the same NIBRS bucket. The coverage gap quantified in Section 4.3 should therefore be understood as a floor rather than a ceiling on the true extent of the mismatch between BCI’s reporting granularity and the registry’s statutory granularity.

4.3 The coverage gap, quantified

Of the 46 registrable-offense categories in § 53-29-202(1)(a), at most 7 distinct categories (rape, sodomy, object rape, sexual abuse/fondling-family offenses, statutory rape, incest, and the commercial-sex-trafficking family) have any direct NIBRS reporting counterpart in BCI’s public sex-offense tables, and even these 7 are themselves aggregations of multiple distinct registrable statutes carrying different registration-length consequences (10 years versus lifetime) that BCI’s reporting format cannot distinguish. The remaining roughly two-thirds of the statutory list, including CSAM offenses, sexual extortion, voyeurism, the lewdness/sexual battery four-conviction threshold provisions, and sexual exploitation of vulnerable adults, generates no extractable incident count anywhere in the public BCI “Crime in Utah” reports. A reader using only BCI’s published sex-offense totals to estimate the volume of registrable conduct in Utah is therefore working from a data source that is structurally blind to a substantial share of what the registry statute actually covers.

Framed numerically, this means that any percentage figure purporting to describe “what share of registrable sex offenses BCI captures” would necessarily understate the true coverage gap if calculated naively by category count alone, since the 7 covered categories are themselves higher-incident-volume offenses (rape and fondling together account for the substantial majority of all reported forcible sex offenses in Table 3.1) while many of the 39 uncovered categories may individually involve smaller incident volumes. The practical effect is that BCI’s data captures a meaningful majority of total reported sexual-offense incident volume while simultaneously failing to capture a meaningful majority of the registry’s statutory breadth, two different and not directly comparable measures of “coverage” that should not be conflated with one another.

This is a data-architecture observation, not a claim about the relative seriousness or frequency of any particular offense category. It means only that BCI's annual reports, as currently structured, are not designed to answer registry-population or registry-policy questions directly, a different data source (court conviction records cross-referenced against the registrable-offense list, or DPS's own registry database) is required for that purpose.

It follows from this section's findings that any future effort to determine whether Utah's registry scope is proportionate to the volume or severity of underlying conduct cannot be completed using BCI's published reports alone, regardless of how many additional years of BCI data such an effort incorporated. The limiting factor is not the time span of the data but its categorical structure: adding another decade of BCI reports would extend Series A and Series B further in time without adding coverage of the roughly two-thirds of § 53-29-202 that BCI's NIBRS categories do not address at all. A methodologically adequate answer to that broader proportionality question would need to begin instead from Utah court conviction records, filtered against the specific statutory citations in Table 4.1, a data source and analytical approach this report does not attempt and explicitly leaves to Section 7's discussion of next steps.

5. Comparative and Contextual Findings

Having established what BCI's data shows on its own terms (Section 3) and how that data relates to the registry statute (Section 4), this section places those findings in a broader interpretive context using sources outside BCI's own publications. The purpose of this section is not to introduce new incident-count data, each of the sources discussed below measures something other than BCI's reported-incident series, but to help the reader understand how much weight the BCI findings can reasonably bear, by comparing them against estimated true incidence, national benchmarks, an independent crime-trend analysis, and the registry's own statutory growth.

Each of the four subsections that follow addresses a different way the Section 3 findings could be misread if taken in isolation, and each draws on a different external source to correct for that specific risk: Section 5.1 corrects for the risk of mistaking a reported-incident count for a true-incidence count; Section 5.2 corrects for the risk of reading Utah's rate in a vacuum without a national benchmark; Section 5.3 corrects for the risk of attributing any apparent post-pandemic movement to Utah-specific causes without checking an independently produced state-level analysis; and Section 5.4 corrects for the risk of assuming the registry's statutory scope and BCI's incident trend are causally linked simply because both are part of the same general policy area. None of these four corrections changes the Section 3 findings themselves; they instead bound how those findings should be interpreted.

5.1 Reported incidents versus estimated true incidence

BCI's figures count incidents reported to law enforcement, not the total incidence of sexual victimization in Utah. Utah's own Department of Health and Human Services Indicator-Based Information System (IBIS) has published an estimate that only about 27 percent of rapes or sexual assaults in Utah were reported to police as of 2022, a figure consistent with national underreporting research. Read alongside that estimate, BCI's reported rape count of roughly 1,500–1,600 per year for 2021–2024 implies a true annual incidence considerably higher, on the order of several thousand, though any such extrapolation carries substantial uncertainty given how underreporting estimates themselves vary by victim age, relationship to offender, and survey methodology.

This underreporting gap has a direct bearing on how the comparatively flat or modestly rising trend documented in Section 3 should be interpreted. A flat reported-incident count does not necessarily mean a flat true-incidence count; it could equally reflect a stable true incidence combined with a stable reporting rate, or a rising true incidence offset by a declining reporting rate, or any number of other combinations the BCI data alone cannot distinguish between. This report's findings should therefore be understood as a statement about what was reported to Utah law enforcement over ten years, not as a direct measurement of the underlying prevalence of sexual victimization in the state, a distinction this report maintains throughout rather than collapsing for the sake of a simpler narrative.

It is also worth noting that the 27 percent reporting-rate estimate cited above is itself a single point estimate drawn from one survey methodology applied at one point in time, not a continuously updated statewide metric tracked alongside BCI's annual incident counts. Underreporting rates plausibly shift over time in response to changes in victim services availability, public awareness campaigns, the perceived responsiveness of law enforcement, and broader cultural attitudes toward disclosure, any of which could move independently of, and in either direction relative to, the true underlying incidence of sexual offending. Because this report has no year-by-year underreporting-rate series to pair against the year-by-year BCI incident series in Table 3.1, it cannot determine what portion, if any, of the modest changes documented in Section 3 reflects a shifting reporting rate as opposed to a shifting true incidence, and it does not claim to resolve that question here.

5.2 Utah's rape rate relative to national figures

Multiple independent sources, the Utah Women & Leadership Project, IBIS, and FBI Crime Data Explorer comparisons, converge on the same finding: rape is the only major violent-crime category in which Utah's reported rate consistently exceeds the national rate, even though Utah's rates for homicide, robbery, and aggravated assault are routinely far below national averages. One IBIS citation places Utah's 2022 reported rape rate at 59.5 per 100,000 population against a national rate of 40 per 100,000, roughly 49 percent higher. This pattern has held across multiple years and multiple data sources, and is corroborated by University of Utah research describing Utah as having one of the highest sexual-assault rates in the nation despite generally low violent-crime rates otherwise.

This persistent gap between Utah's rape rate and its rates for other violent crimes is one of the more frequently cited statistics in Utah criminal-justice policy discussions, and this report includes it because it is directly relevant to how Section 3's findings should be read in a comparative light. At the same time, a single state-to-state rate comparison cannot, on its own, distinguish between a genuinely higher rate of underlying offending and a comparatively higher rate of reporting or recording relative to other states; the same underreporting and definitional issues discussed in Section 5.1 apply with equal force to interstate comparisons, since other states' reported rates are subject to their own underreporting dynamics, which need not match Utah's. This report presents the comparison as a well-documented pattern worth noting, not as a settled causal finding about why Utah's reported rate differs from the national figure.

A further caution applies specifically to the FBI Crime Data Explorer comparisons that anchor much of this pattern: the FBI itself cautions against using its UCR/NIBRS state-level totals for direct state-by-state ranking, given wide variation across states in agency participation rates, definitional implementation, and population-reporting completeness, all of which can affect a state's apparent rate independent of its true underlying crime level. This report cites the Utah-versus-national rape-rate comparison because it is widely referenced in Utah policy discussion and is corroborated by multiple independent sources beyond the FBI figures alone, not because this report treats FBI state rankings as methodologically unproblematic in general.

5.3 Post-2020 statewide crime trend (independent corroboration)

An October 2024 Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) issue brief, examining crime trends since the 2020 nationwide spike, found that violent crime in Utah, including rape specifically, declined across the board from 2020 through 2023, alongside a 35 percent drop in the homicide rate over the same period (from 3.1 per 100,000 in 2020 to 2.0 per 100,000 in 2023). This CCJJ finding is broadly consistent with the relatively flat-to-modest rape counts in Series A (Table 3.1) once year-to-year agency-participation differences are accounted for, and provides an independent, non-BCI-authored data point supporting the conclusion that Utah did not experience a sustained post-pandemic surge in sexual offending of the kind seen in some other violent-crime categories nationally.

The value of this corroboration lies specifically in its independence from BCI's own publication process. CCJJ is a distinct state agency with its own statutory research mandate and its own access to law enforcement data, and its issue brief was prepared as a general crime-trend analysis rather than as a sex-offense-specific study, which reduces the likelihood that its conclusions were shaped by the same institutional assumptions or reporting quirks that might affect BCI's own framing of its data. That a second, independently constituted state body examining a different but overlapping dataset reached a broadly consistent conclusion about the absence of a sustained post-2020 sexual-offense

surge strengthens confidence in this report's Section 3 findings beyond what BCI's data alone could establish.

It should be noted that CCJJ's issue brief and this report's Series A ultimately draw on overlapping underlying source data, both rely, directly or indirectly, on NIBRS incident counts reported to BCI, so this corroboration should not be overstated as two entirely independent measurements of the same phenomenon arriving at the same answer by coincidence. What the corroboration does establish is that CCJJ's own analytical framing and choice of comparison years, arrived at independently of this report's authors and for a different research purpose, did not surface a sustained post-pandemic surge narrative that this report's own framing might otherwise be suspected of having engineered. That is a meaningful, if more modest, form of corroboration than two fully independent data sources would provide.

5.4 Registry growth has outpaced any plausible reading of the incident data

Utah's Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry has grown from roughly 10 registrable offense categories when first established in 1973 to 46 categories as of the 2026 General Session, with the registrable population itself exceeding 10,000 individuals statewide as of the most recent Department of Public Safety registry export. Compared against the BCI incident series in this report, in which the seven NIBRS-trackable offense categories most relevant to the registry moved within a relatively narrow band across 2021–2024, and several Summary-era years showed rape counts declining, the registry's near-fivefold expansion in statutory scope reflects legislative policy choices made independently of, and not obviously calibrated to, the underlying volume or trend of reported sexual offending documented in this report.

This observation describes a structural relationship between two independently-tracked series (statutory scope and reported-incident volume); it does not, by itself, evaluate whether any individual category's inclusion on the registry is well- or poorly-calibrated to the harm it addresses. That determination requires offense-specific severity, recidivism, and proportionality analysis beyond the scope of this BCI-data-focused report.

It is important to be precise about what this section does and does not claim. The fact that registry scope has expanded while reported-incident volume has remained comparatively stable is not, by itself, evidence that the expansion was unwarranted; legislatures regularly add new categories to registries in response to newly recognized harms, newly criminalized conduct (such as the CSAM and sexual extortion offenses discussed in Section 4), or changed understanding of an offense's severity, none of which would necessarily be reflected in a rising incident count for older, already-registrable categories. What this section establishes is narrower and more defensible: that BCI's incident data, on its own, provides no support for a claim that registry expansion was driven by a corresponding rise in reported offending, since no such rise is visible in the categories BCI can measure.

Whether the expansion was driven by other valid considerations is a separate question this report does not attempt to resolve.

This section's finding is also asymmetric in a way worth making explicit: the absence of a rising-incident justification in BCI's data does not establish that registry expansion was driven by something illegitimate, any more than its presence would have established that the expansion was well-calibrated. The data simply does not speak to legislative motivation at all. A legislature could expand registry scope in direct response to a single high-profile case, an emerging pattern of conduct not yet reflected in multi-year incident statistics, advocacy from victims or service providers, or a judgment about appropriate societal response to a category of harm regardless of its statistical frequency, none of which this report's BCI-based methodology is equipped to detect, confirm, or rule out.

6. Limitations

The findings presented in this report are only as reliable as the data underlying them, and that data carries a number of limitations that bear directly on how the report's conclusions should be used. The limitations below are organized to track the report's own structure: the first three concern the BCI incident data itself (Sections 2 and 3), the next two concern the registry-mapping analysis (Section 4), and the final two concern the boundaries of what this report does not attempt to measure at all. Readers relying on this report for legislative, legal, or policy purposes should treat each limitation as a constraint on the strength of the conclusions that can properly be drawn, not as a minor disclaimer to be set aside.

None of the limitations listed below is fatal to the report's core purpose, which is to state plainly and accurately what BCI's own published data shows. Rather, each limitation marks a boundary past which this report's conclusions should not be extended without additional data this report does not have. A reader who keeps these seven boundaries in view while using this report's findings will be using the report as it is intended to be used; a reader who extends any individual finding past the boundary the relevant limitation describes will be drawing a conclusion this report does not support.

- Incidents, not people. Every figure in this report counts reported incidents or victims, not unique offenders. A single offender can generate multiple incident counts (e.g., a single defendant prosecuted on counts spanning rape, sodomy, and fondling against one or more victims), and the same victim may be the subject of multiple counted incidents across categories within a single criminal episode.
- Reported, not adjudicated. BCI figures reflect what was reported to law enforcement, not what was charged, convicted, or resulted in registry placement. The gap between reported incident and registry entry is large and is not measured by this report; a separate conviction-data analysis is required to estimate it.
- Agency participation varies, especially pre-2021. As detailed in Section 2.3, NIBRS sex-offense tables for 2019 and 2020 explicitly do not reflect statewide totals, and BCI says

so directly in those reports. Earlier hybrid years (2015–2018) have similar or worse NIBRS coverage gaps; this report relies on Summary-format statewide percentage changes for those years precisely because the NIBRS detail is not usable as a statewide figure.

- NIBRS categories do not align with Utah’s registrable-offense statute. As Section 4 demonstrates, the large majority of § 53-29-202’s 46 categories have no distinct counterpart in BCI’s public reporting format. This report does not and cannot calculate “what percentage of registrable offenses are captured by BCI data” as a single number, because the underlying categories are not commensurable.
- 2025 figures are preliminary and methodologically distinct. The 5,141 figure cited in Section 3.3 comes from a live dashboard query rather than a finalized, audited annual PDF report, and combines forcible, non-forcible, and human-trafficking categories in a way the PDF reports do not. It should be treated as directional, not final.
- Population-coverage percentages describe agencies, not necessarily uniform reporting quality. A jurisdiction counted as “100% covered” in BCI’s county-coverage tables submitted some NIBRS data, but the completeness and accuracy of that data depends on each agency’s own records-management practices, which this report cannot independently verify.
- This report does not address case outcomes. It says nothing about charging decisions, plea negotiations, conviction rates, sentencing, or registry-removal rates, each of which is governed by a different data source (the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Department of Corrections, or DPS’s registry database) and would require separate analysis.

7. Conclusion

Ten years of BCI “Crime in Utah” data show a sex-offense reporting picture that is more stable than dramatic. The fully comparable 2021–2024 NIBRS series shows forcible sex offenses (rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and fondling combined) holding essentially flat, from 4,899 to 4,962 reported incidents per year, a net change of only 1.3 percent across the four-year window. The 2022-to-2024 comparison, in which agency participation was already near-complete in both years, shows forcible offenses actually declining modestly (5,017 to 4,962, down 1.1 percent), with both fondling and rape counts falling slightly from their 2022 peak, sodomy and object rape rising modestly on smaller bases, a declining non-forcible (incest and statutory rape) total, and a rising kidnapping count. The pre-2021 Summary-format trend, while less granular, points to rape counts rising through 2017–2018 and declining modestly in 2019–2020, broadly consistent with an independent CCJJ finding that Utah violent crime, including rape, declined from its 2020 peak through 2023.

This report has not attempted to settle a contested policy debate or to recommend any specific change to Utah’s registrable-offense statute. Its contribution is narrower and, the authors believe, more durable: a transparent, methodologically explicit account of what one

specific, authoritative data source, BCI's decade of Crime in Utah reporting, actually shows, presented alongside an equally transparent account of where that data source's structural limitations begin. Future work that draws on this report should carry forward both halves of that pairing; citing the incident counts in Section 3 without also carrying forward the coverage and category-mapping limitations documented in Sections 2, 4, and 6 would misrepresent what this report establishes.

Set against this stable-to-modestly-declining reported-incident picture is a registrable-offense statute that has expanded from roughly 10 categories in 1973 to 46 categories today, the large majority of which, sexual extortion, CSAM possession and distribution, voyeurism, sexual exploitation of vulnerable adults, the lewdness/sexual battery conviction-threshold provisions, generate no separately countable figure anywhere in BCI's public reporting architecture. Any future attempt to evaluate whether Utah's registry scope is proportionate to the conduct it targets will need to look past BCI's annual incident counts, which were never designed to answer that question, toward conviction-level data matched directly against the 46 statutory categories, the AOC court-record approach, rather than the NIBRS incident-report approach, is the methodologically appropriate tool for that inquiry.

In closing, this report's value lies less in any single statistic it reports and more in the discipline of its method: stating exactly which years are comparable and which are not, stating exactly which statutory categories BCI's data can and cannot speak to, and declining to bridge those gaps with assumption where the underlying source material does not support a bridge. A reader who takes nothing else from this report should take the structural distinction between Section 3's reported-incident findings and Section 4's registry-scope findings, the two halves of Utah's sex-offense data and policy landscape that, as this report has shown throughout, do not measure the same thing and should not be asked to answer each other's questions.

Appendix A: Source Documents

- Utah Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Identification, Crime in Utah 2024 (published August 2025). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2023 (published March 2025). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2022 (published February 2025, Final 2). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2021 (published December 2022). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2020 (published October 2021). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2019 (published August 2020). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2018 (CIU-2018-1, published September 2019). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2017 (published September 2018). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2016 (published May 2018). bci.utah.gov.
- Crime in Utah 2015 (published December 2017). bci.utah.gov.
- Utah BCI Crime in Utah NIBRS Interactive Dashboard, calendar-year-2025 query, captured May 2026. bci.utah.gov/crime-in-utah-dashboards.
- Utah Code §§ 53-29-201 through 53-29-207, effective version incorporating Chapter 291 (2025 General Session) and Chapters 155, 330, and 458 (2026 General Session). le.utah.gov.
- Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Issue Brief: Update on Utah's Crime Rates Since 2020 Spike (October 2024). justice.utah.gov.
- Utah Department of Health and Human Services, IBIS-PH Health Indicator Report of Sexual Violence. ibis.utah.gov.
- Utah Department of Public Safety press releases accompanying the 2017, 2018, and 2020 Crime in Utah report launches. dpsnews.utah.gov.

