



OFFICE OF THE
STATE AUDITOR

News Release

For Immediate Release

May 14, 2024

State Auditor Releases Sample of Frivolous HB 257-Related Complaints

Salt Lake City, UTAH –

The following is a statement from State Auditor John Dougall:

Almost two weeks ago, in compliance with a statutory mandate contained within HB 257 (Sex-Based Designation for Privacy, AntiBullying, and Women’s Opportunities), codified at Utah Code Section 63G-31 (Statute), the Office of the State Auditor (Office) launched an online complaint form, similar to its traditional online hotline reporting form. This form allows members of the public to report alleged violations of the Statute by government entities. The Office then received over 10,000 frivolous complaints (and has not yet identified a single legitimate complaint). The Office also experienced spammers attempting to otherwise overwhelm the HB 257-related online complaint form. Of note, those spammers have been unable to bring down that form.

Recently, the Office has received various inquiries from the news media regarding disclosing the details of the thousands of frivolous and abusive complaints received. To satisfy these inquiries, I have authorized the release of a sample of online complaints that represent a cross-section of those the Office has received. We have performed minimal redactions of individual information and/or unsubstantiated claims towards governmental entities. I have also released a lightly redacted copy of a letter that I received as well as samples of audio messages received. However, in the interest of transparency and public disclosure, we have left intact most of the content submitted, including any vulgar, threatening, and suggestive language. The overwhelming majority of submissions have already been deleted as part of our initial screening process once they were identified as frivolous.

While the overwhelming number of frivolous complaints appear to be from those opposed to various aspects of the bill, unfortunately individuals on both sides of the broader issues still fail to understand the Office’s extremely limited role in reviewing and investigating complaints regarding governmental entities, not individuals. Sadly, some legislators who celebrate the bill as well as some legislators who condemn the bill also failed to understand the limited scope of the Office’s statutory mandate.

The released complaints are on the Office’s website. Links are provided below.

Sample of online submissions: <https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/05/HB-257-Complaints-Combined.pdf>

Letter received: https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/05/Written-Complaint-1_Redacted.pdf

Sample of audio messages received: <https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/05/ComplaintAudioMessages.mp3>

About the Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor provides Utah taxpayers and government officials with an independent assessment of financial operation, statutory compliance, and performance management for state and local government.

Specific activities of the Office include performing financial audits, conducting Federal funds compliance audits, providing local government oversight, conducting agency and program performance audits, performing fraud and compliance audits, and operating the State Auditor Hotline for citizens to report suspected financial issues or improprieties. These capabilities strengthen Utah State Government and help taxpayers have confidence in the integrity of Utah’s government agencies.

The Office also provides interactive graphical tools to help taxpayers and policymakers gain greater insight into governmental financial activities. These tools include the Transparent Utah Public Finance website (transparent.utah.gov) as well as the award-winning Project KIDS public education analysis dashboards (auditor.utah.gov/kids).

The State Auditor is a Constitutional Officer of the State of Utah, elected directly by the state’s citizens every four years. The role of the State Auditor is authorized in Article VII, Section 15 of the Utah Constitution. For more information, see auditor.utah.gov.

Contact:

Mandy Teerlink
Public Information Officer
Office of the State Auditor
425-330-1339
mteerlink@utah.gov