

The ACLU Is Not Done Fighting For Transparency In County Jails

January 31, 2018

KUER

<http://kuer.org/post/aclu-not-done-fighting-transparency-county-jails#stream/0>

The ACLU of Utah will continue to fight for the full release of Utah's current jail standards. This comes after the state announced a redacted version will be available online.

Jail standards dictate medical and mental health care, sanitation and food served in Utah jails. The current standards are not mandatory, but most jails say they work to comply with those guidelines. There's no there's no way of knowing for sure, because the standards are kept secret.

In a move to improve transparency, the Utah Department of Corrections announced last week it would write new standards and release them to the public — a process that would take about a year. Meanwhile, the Utah Sheriff's Association agreed to post a portion of the current standards on their website.

That won't cut it for the ACLU, says Leah Farrell, the ACLU of Utah's staff attorney. She says while the organization welcomes the additional transparency, the guidelines should be made public without redactions. The Sheriff's Association plans to withhold standards they say could put safety and security at risk. They're also protecting the intellectual property rights of the consultant who wrote them.

The ACLU is appealing to the state records committee and may potentially file a lawsuit if they're not successful. They hope access to the standards will provide insight into why so many county jail inmates have died Utah.

