

USU data law expert named to state privacy commission

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SALT LAKE CITY – Gov. Spencer Cox has appointed the executive director of the Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University to a new state privacy watchdog group.

Chris Koopman of USU will lend his data privacy law expertise to Utah’s newly created Personal Privacy Oversight Commission.

Koopman was one of 12 technology and legal experts named to that panel Thursday in a joint announcement by Cox, Attorney General Sean Reyes and State Auditor John Dougall.

“Protecting the personal privacy of all Utahns has become even more important as technology has advanced,” Cox explained. “I’m pleased to see this new privacy commission come together and look forward to developing policies that will hold the state accountable for the use of Utahns’ personal data and information.”

Spokesperson Nicole Davis of the state auditor’s office explained that the privacy oversight commission was established by the passage of House Bill 243 during the 2021 general session of the Legislature. The goal of that legislation is to provide guidelines for the use of emerging technology for state officials, particularly law enforcement.

As executive director at the USU Center for Growth and Opportunity, Koopman specializes in technology regulation, competition and innovation.

His research and commentary have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, as well as on the Bloomberg network and National Public Radio.

Prior to joining USU, Koopman was a senior research fellow and director of the Technology Policy Program at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

He is currently a senior affiliated scholar with the Mercatus Center and a member of the Information Technology & Emerging Technology Working Group at the Federalist Society’s Regulatory Transparency Project.

Other Utahns appointed to the Personal Privacy Oversight Commission by Cox include Quinn Fowers, a Weber County internet technologist; Aliahu “Alli” Bey, a cyber-security expert; Nayana Penmetsa, representing private industry concerns; and Keith Squires, the interim chief safety officer at the University of Utah.

Reyes’ appointments to the panel include Jeff Gray, representing the Attorney General’s office, and Utah County Sheriff Mike Smith.

Dougall’s appointments include Matthew Weller, president of All West Communications; Amy Knapp, a cyber-security expert; Brandon Greenwood; representing the interests of private technology industries; Phillip J. Windley, a data privacy law expert from Brigham Young University; and Marina Lowe, representing the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah.

Under state law, the Personal Privacy Oversight Commission is charged with developing best practices for privacy protection that state agencies can adopt. The panel is also empowered to conduct reviews of government technology uses to safeguard personal privacy and data security.