

ACLU, Disability Law Center File Suit Over Secretive Davis County Jail Standards

By [KUER NEWS](#)
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The ACLU of Utah and Disability Law Center have announced a [lawsuit against Davis County](#) to release its standards for operating local jails following a series of well-publicized inmate deaths.

In a press release issued Wednesday, the ACLU said it's seeking court intervention after its public records requests and appeals to release the standards were denied by the Utah State Records Committee.

Davis County uses jail standards written by Utah's former corrections chief Gary DeLand, who has asserted proprietary rights over them. The press release [cites a report from KUER's Whittney Evans in December](#) that jail operators in at least 19 other states have also purchased DeLand's jails manual.

At a State Records Committee hearing in April, the board ruled that because Davis County was not the owner of the standards, they were not subject to the states open records laws, or GRAMA.

"The extraordinary number of deaths in Utah jails in 2016 exposed the truth that we don't know how county jails are being run, and if they are complying with their own standards," said Leah Farrell, an ACLU of Utah attorney.

Farrell said county jails have an obligation to be more transparent and their standards should be made public.

"The fact that these jail standards, were purchased with taxpayer money and are being used to operate a county jail staffed by public employees and housing hundreds of Utah residents makes them public records by definition," said David Reymann, another attorney on the suit. The Davis County Attorney's office did not immediately return a request for comment from KUER.

For more, hear [KUER's "More To Say" episode on Utah's rash of inmate deaths](#).