

Bigamy is no longer a felony in Utah

A law effectively decriminalizing bigamy is now in effect in Utah.

For decades, **bigamy** was a third-degree **felony**, legally punishable by up to five years in prison and up to a \$5, 000 fine. The new law makes it an **infraction**, putting the offense on par with getting a traffic ticket.

bigamy 重婚; 一夫多妻制

felony 重罪

Polygamy has been practiced in Utah by certain religious groups since before it became a state and continues to **persist** to this day.

polygamy 多配偶

persist 坚持; 持续

Though the practice has long been illegal under state and federal law, the Utah attorney general's office has declined to prosecute the offense, except when it's committed along with other crimes. The new law makes the attorney general's policy official.

The bill passed the Legislature in February with overwhelming support.

Republican state Sen. Deidre Henderson, the bill's lead sponsor, called Utah's previous law unenforceable, saying that it didn't prevent people from engaging in polygamy, but instead isolated polygamous communities and prevented potential victims from reporting abuse.

"Instead, these government actions drove polygamous families underground into a shadow society where the vulnerable make easy prey. Branding all polygamists as felons has facilitated abuse, not eliminated polygamy."

Opponents say the bill normalizes polygamy. The Sound Choices Coalition, a nonprofit organization opposed to polygamy, condemned the decriminalization of bigamy.

"Most who are living in these fundamentalist polygamous groups and families, are treated as property, forced to work without pay, traded as daughters, **coerced** into having unwanted sex, and into giving birth to numerous children they can not care for."

coerce 强迫; 压抑