

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement Regarding the Investigative Review of the August 12, 2021 Petito-Laundrie Incident in Moab, Utah

Salt Lake City, UT – Late Tuesday, January 12, we had the opportunity to read the [investigative review](#) of Moab City Police Department case #2021-001108, involving Gabby Petito and Brian Laundrie.

As domestic violence professionals, we understand the many complexities that present in domestic and intimate partner violence cases. It is because of these complexities that ongoing training is necessary, evidence-based and trauma-informed responses are critical, resources are readily available for victims and abusers, and partnerships between law enforcement and victim service providers are strong. It is also imperative that we continue to increase the public's awareness of domestic and intimate partner violence—before tragedies happen. We must also equip our first responders and our communities with victim services and behavioral health providers who are best trained to intervene and follow-up when individuals and families are experiencing or displaying unhealthy behaviors and relations.

Bidirectional violence is common; however, when females use hands in self-defense, it is typically in the form of scratches. There are times when someone who has been a victim, short- or long-term, responds in the same manner in which their abuser treats them, an act that is more commonly known as self-defense or violent resistance. In some of these instances, short- or long-term victims may be legally considered, and subsequently charged as, the predominant physical aggressor. It should be noted that individuals who experience abuse also experience post-traumatic stress disorder and recognizing this when responding to incidents of domestic or intimate partner violence is crucial to a proper response.

We appreciate the detailed review conducted by Captain Brandon Ratcliffe of Price City Police Department, as well as his understanding of domestic and intimate partner violence.

The recommendations provided by Captain Ratcliffe make sense given the findings in the investigative review and we look forward to working with Moab City Police Department to enhance their knowledge of, and improve their response to, domestic or intimate partner violence incidents.

Officers Pratt and Robbins provided a swift response to the call, took the time to attempt to understand the totality of the current and past relations between Petito and Laundrie—which is not always easy to do in an hour's time, and appeared to show compassion, kindness, and professionalism toward both Petito and Laundrie. The acknowledgements by Pratt and Robbins, specific to mistakes made in this case and their willingness to rectify them, is commendable.

Law enforcement professionals play an integral role in our work and we recognize the toll domestic and intimate partner violence incidents have on them—we believe they care and we thank them for their service.

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Utah **Statistics:** vipp.health.utah.gov/intimate-partner-violence

Free, Confidential, Statewide **24-Hour Utah Domestic Violence LINKLine:** 1-800-897-LINK (5465)

Utah Domestic Violence Coalition **Mission:** Creating a state where domestic and sexual violence are intolerable.