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## Families sue Utah school over alleged sex abuse by counselor

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Three families have filed a federal lawsuit against a Panguitch-based boarding school for troubled teens, claiming the institution failed to supervise a counselor charged with sexually abusing several students.

Prosecutors on Wednesday charged Eric Allen Glosson, 28, in 6th District Court with eight counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse for allegedly having sexual relations with youth at Silverado Academy in Garfield County between April 20 and June 18.

He is also charged with one count of second-degree felony custodial sexual relations with a youth receiving state services and one count of third-degree felony dealing in materials harmful to a minor.

Now, families from Nevada, Georgia and Michigan say Silverado Academy should have done more to keep tabs on Glosson's interactions with students. Their complaint alleges the school failed to protect their children from Glosson, who had been previously fired over concerns he was "too close to the teenagers in the program."

In late 2010, Glosson was rehired as a coach and athletic coordinator and allowed to supervise 13- to 18-year-olds, according to the complaint. He then sexually abused numerous teens, the complaint alleges.

"Due to the absence of appropriate oversight, supervision and security policies, procedures and practices, Mr. Glosson was allowed to have repeated access to and time with individual students privately, in multiple locations and settings, including students over whom he was not a coach and had no supervisory duties," the complaint states.

"On multiple occasions, Mr. Glosson sexually abused numerous teenagers at the academy, including the minor plaintiffs in Silverado's classroom, Glosson's living quarters and the students' living quarters, among other places."



Courtesy image Eric Allen Glosson has been charged in 6th District Court with eight counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse for allegedly having sexual relations with youth at Silverado Academy in Garfield County.

The complaint alleges that Glosson discouraged students from reporting the abuse by threatening to not recommend the students for an advanced program. He used “bribery, physical force, intimidation and deceit,” to cover up his relationships with the students, the complaint states.

The plaintiffs, who are not being identified by The Salt Lake Tribune to protect the identity of the alleged victims, are seeking at least \$75,000 in damages for breach of fiduciary duty, negligent employment, and infliction of emotional distress.

In a statement released Wednesday afternoon following Glosson’s arrest, Silverado Academy officials said one student reported the alleged conduct early Sunday morning during a Father’s Day call to his parents.

“We reported these events to the appropriate state authorities on the same day,” academy officials said in a statement. “We are cooperating fully with the ongoing investigation.”

Glosson had called authorities on his own in May, telling law enforcement that a youth in Arizona was contacting him over Facebook and “threatening to publicize alleged sexual abuse that Glosson had perpetrated,” according to the complaint. Law enforcement came to Silverado Academy to investigate but school allowed him to continue working with youth after no immediate arrest took place, the complaint states.

Silverado Academy was founded by former U.S. Senate candidate Tim Bridgewater. The program costs between \$4,000 and \$7,000 each month and families must agree to send their teenagers to the school for a minimum of six months, court documents state.

The length of a teenager’s stay depends on “progress.” Students live in a cabin and are assigned a set of “coaches” along with a therapist. When Silverado hired Glosson, he had no formal training and no post-high school education, the complaint states.

Glosson, who is being held in the Garfield County Jail, made his initial court appearance Thursday and a July 1 preliminary hearing has been set.

The school has offered to provide counseling services to teenagers affected by Glosson’s behavior, according to the complaint.

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