

GrassRoots

Committed to Promoting the Principles of Limited Government, Constitution, Representative Government, Participatory Republic, Free Market Economy, Family, and Separation of Powers

www.utahgrassroots.org

Utah GrassRoots Preliminary Annual Report—April 2026

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Introduction

The 2026 General Session of the Utah State Legislature concluded on March 6th. About 1020 bills (including a few resolutions) were filed and numbered during the session; and 542 of them passed--maybe about half of them during the last 5 days? Thus the Legislature managed to pass an average of 12 bills per day over those 45 days.

Budgeted spending for Fiscal Year 2027 amounts to \$31.6 billion, which, according to our math, amounts to a 2.6% increase over the previous fiscal year’s \$30.8 billion. (One source estimates that 27% of the FY2026 amount came from “Federal Funds”.) If we estimate Utah’s population at 3.5 million, then this budgeted spending for a single year amounts to \$9K of spending per person, or \$36K per family of four. We think this is excessive, and does not qualify as limited government (though we suppose it could be worse).

With over a thousand bills filed and numbered, of course, numerous issues were addressed, many of which we will not touch here. One issue of importance to many Republican delegates: Transparency (or lack thereof) in the “Lieutenant Governor’s” office over the question of whether the Cox-Henderson ticket did, or did not, submit enough “legitimate” signatures to qualify for the Republican gubernatorial primary in 2024. We did not detect (so far) any significant action directly on this issue during the session. But arguably one bill very much related to this issue was filed: House Joint Resolution 25, “Proposal to Amend Utah Constitution - Secretary of State”, sponsored by Representative Shepherd and Senator Brammer, which would appear to have a Secretary of State replace the Lieutenant Governor as the state’s chief elections officer. HJR25 passed the House 57-12, but never came to a Senate committee or floor vote.

Following are some bills that we considered important during the session. (Note that this is a “Preliminary Annual Report” that we did not want to delay until after the party convention season. We intend to publish a “Final Annual Report” later, after we have had time to adequately review additional bills of interest.)

Bill descriptions

Bills are listed by number with House Bills (and a House Concurrent Resolution) listed first. The bill sponsor(s) is (are) given in parentheses. The voting tally for each bill gives the numbers of Yea votes, Nay votes, and those absent or not voting. Text of all bills can be found at <http://le.utah.gov> .

HB85 (Representative Shepherd, Senator Winterton) Proposed to prohibit the governor or the chief executive officer of a political subdivision from declaring a state of emergency exclusively in response to an international organization's proclamation declaring a state of emergency. A declaration of emergency is often the excuse given for some of the worst abuses of human rights. We saw this in abundance during the COVID scare of 2020-2021, in which many government entities got seriously out of control. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (55-11-9), but failed the Senate (12-17-0).**

HB174 (Rep Shipp, Sen McCay) Prohibits providing cross-sex hormones and puberty blockers to minors after January 28, 2027. We believe the to-be-prohibited treatments are sufficiently risky (experimental) that minors should be protected from them and their long-term consequences. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (53-15-7), and the Senate (20-6-3), and was signed into law by the "Governor".**

HB195 (Rep Ivory, Sen Grover) Requires the state treasurer to: a) complete a precious metals study for two additional years; and b) issue one or more requests for proposals for the creation and operation of a precious metals-backed electronic payment system, the objective of which would be to facilitate, when desired, payments between the state, state employees, and state contractors in precious metals. One important objective of this bill is to improve the state's compliance with United States Constitution, Article I, Section 10, which specifies, "No State shall . .

. make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts. . . ."

GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (65-6-4), and the Senate (22-6-1), and became law without the "Governor's" signature.

HB245Sub1 (Rep Clancy) Proposed to direct the Labor Commission to determine the wages for the occupations a construction project requires for each county. Also proposed to establish: a) a wage minimum that a contractor may pay a qualifying employee; b) a recordkeeping requirement; and c) the penalties (class B misdemeanor) for noncompliance. We believe this bill goes against the principles of Free Market Economy and Freedom of Association. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Failed the House (25-46-4).**

HB260 (Rep Loubet, Sen Brammer) Criminalizes the "unauthorized practice of law", making it a class A misdemeanor (or worse), thus punishing behavior that is not inherently criminal. Empowers the Board of Commissioners for the Utah State Bar to "bring a civil action against a person for engaging in the unauthorized practice of law". With these changes to Utah Code, HB260 emphasizes government licensure (or lack thereof) over actual harm caused by incompetent or sloppy representation. In some circumstances, HB260 infringes an individual's Sixth Amendment right to counsel, by disallowing any representation not licensed by the state. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the House (71-1-3), and the Senate (25-2-2), and was signed by the "Governor".** (For more-detailed analysis of HB260, see our legislative update of February 23rd, 2026 on our website.)

HB263 (Rep Clancy, Sen Cullimore) Proposed to establish a \$175 "heavy duty emissions compliance fee" for a registration or renewal of a heavy duty vehicle with a 2009 or older model year. According to the bill's fiscal note, the fee was expected to raise about

\$3 million of revenue per year. Maybe some kind of emissions fee is appropriate, but, with the various exceptions proposed in the bill (for farm vehicles, ambulances, government-owned vehicles, for example), this is not an even-handed emissions fee, but a targeted one that violates the principle of Equal Treatment Under The Law. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the House (40-25-10), and the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee (3-2-2), but never came to a Senate floor vote.**

HB404 (Rep Shallenberger, Sen Brammer) Permits a landlord to restrict occupancy in single-sex housing to individuals of the designated biological sex. Clarifies that such restriction is not unlawful discrimination under the Utah Fair Housing Act. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (50-20-5), and the Senate (19-7-3), and was signed by the “Governor”.**

HB464 (Rep Peck, Sen Balderree) Proposed to allow a parent to complete all the education requirements and behind-the-wheel driving hours for driver education purposes. Parents have ultimate responsibility for their children’s education; this option should be allowed. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (42-26-7), but never came to a Senate floor vote.**

HB471 (Rep Monson, Sen Stratton) Amends provisions related to Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) eligibility, including work requirements and citizenship-or-legal-residence requirements. Also provides for disenrolling individuals no longer eligible for Medicaid due to death or failure to meet residency requirements. Medicaid and SNAP do not fall under the Proper Role of Government, but, to the extent that we have these programs, we should exercise due diligence to ensure that waste and fraud and dependence on taxpayers are minimized. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the**

House (55-13-7), and the Senate (20-5-4), and was signed by the “Governor”.

HB502 (Rep Welton, Sen McKell) Establishes requirements for standardizing citizenship grades. (The State Board of Education is directed to write rules to this end.) Also establishes a citizenship grade scholarship program in higher education funded through voluntary tax return contributions. We are skeptical of centralizing more power in the State Board of Education on this topic. We oppose creation of another state-sponsored scholarship program; this is a question that Free Market participants should decide. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the House (46-22-7), and the Senate (20-9-0), and was signed by the “Governor”.**

HCR6 (Rep Whyte, Sen Fillmore) Supports implementation of the Utah Housing Strategic Plan, which, in various ways, proposes various government interference in the markets, supposedly “to address Utah’s housing crisis”. For example, it proposes to “Secure ongoing funding for a revolving loan fund to provide low- or zero-interest loans for the acquisition and development of affordable housing projects and may be repaid by development.” Such funding, along with artificial manipulation of interest rates, is not a Proper Role of Government. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the House (41-26-8), and the Senate (22-3-4), and was signed by the “Governor”.** (For more-detailed analysis of HCR6, and of the Utah Housing Strategic Plan, see our legislative update of February 17th, 2026 on our website.)

Utah State House																			
2026 Voting Summary																			
Y or y="yes", N or n="no"; a=absent or not voting; Y or N=good vote; y or n=bad vote																			
			Bill:	HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 245	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 464	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248	2026 Prelim
GrassRoots Recommended Votes:			Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Average
Rep-Party	Dist	County(ies)																	
Nelson Abbott-R	57	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	a	a	Y	n	Y	N	N	Y	a		N		91%
Cheryl Acton-R	38	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	N	y	Y	y		a		62%
Carl Albrecht-R	70	*	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	n	Y	N	N	Y	N		N		86%
John Arthur-D	41	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	n	y		y		7%
Tiara Auxier-R	4	*	Y	a	Y	a	y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	a	N	N		92%
Melissa Ballard-R	20	Davis	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		y		57%
Stewart Barlow-R	17	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	n	Y	Y	N	y	Y	N		N		79%
Bridger Bolinder-R	29	Juab, Millard, Tooele	Y	a	Y	N	y	N	a	Y	Y	N	y	Y	N		N		83%
Wait Brooks-R	75	Washington	Y	Y	Y	a	y	a	Y	a	a	N	y	Y	N		N		80%
Jeffrey Burton-R	64	Utah	Y	Y	Y	y	y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	y		N		71%
Kristen Chevrier-R	54	Utah	Y	Y	a	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	N	a	Y	y		N		75%
Scott Chew-R	68	*	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	n	Y	N	N	Y	N		N		86%
Kay Christofferson-R	53	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N		N		93%
Tyler Clancy-R	60	Utah	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	Y	Y	y		y		43%
Paul Cutler-R	18	Davis	Y	Y	a	N	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	y	Y	y		y		46%
Jen Dailey-Provost-D	22	Salt Lake	n	a	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	n	y		y		8%
Ariel Defay-R	15	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	y	y		57%
Rosalba Dominguez-D	35	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	a	y	y	n	N		y		15%
James Dunnigan-R	36	Salt Lake	Y	Y	n	y	y	y	Y	n	Y	N	y	Y	y		N		50%
Steve Eliason-R	43	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	y	Y	a		y		46%
Joseph Elison-R	72	Washington	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	N	N	N		80%
Doug Fiefla-R	48	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	y	y	N	Y	Y	Y	y	Y	N	Y	y	N		71%
Jake Fitsemanu-D	30	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	Y	y		y		14%
Stephanie Gricius-R	50	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	a	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N		N		92%
Matthew Gwynn-R	6	Weber	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	y	Y	N		y		50%
Katy Hall-R	11	Davis, Weber	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	y		N		79%
Leah Hansen-R	51	Utah	Y	n	n	N	y	N	Y	n	a	N	N	n	N		N		62%
Jon Hawkins-R	55	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	a	Y	N		N		69%
Sahara Hayes-D	32	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	n	y	y	y		7%
Sandra Hollins-D	21	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	n	Y		y		7%
Ken Ivory-R	39	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	Y	N		N		92%
Colin Jack-R	73	Washington	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y		N		64%
Jill Koford-R	10	Weber	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	a	y	Y	N		N		85%
Mike Kohler-R	59	Summit, Wasatch	Y	a	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	y	a	Y	N		N		83%
Jason Kyle-R	8	Morgan, Weber	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N		N		93%
Trevor Lee-R	16	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	a	Y	N	a	Y	N		N		92%
Karianne Lisonbee-R	14	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	a	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	a	a		92%
Anthony Loubet-R	27	Salt Lake	Y	a	Y	y	y	y	n	a	Y	y	y	a	Y		y		27%
			Bill:	HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 245	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 464	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248	
GrassRoots Recommended Vote:			Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	

*House District 4 includes Morgan, Rich, Summit
 *House District 68 includes Daggett, Duchesne, Summit, Uintah
 *House District 70 includes Sevier, Piute, Beaver, Iron

SB60 (Sen McCay, Rep Eliason) Cuts corporate and individual income tax rates from 4.5% to 4.45%. This amounts to about \$100 million per year of tax cut ongoing. Given the size of government in Utah, we might hope for even more cuts in spending and taxes, but we definitely welcome this tax cut. **GrassRoots favors a YES vote. Passed the House (61-11-3), and the Senate (22-7-0), and was signed by the "Governor".**

SB176Sub2 (Sen Pitcher, Rep T Peterson) Requires, subject to specified exceptions, that when a state entity procures landscape maintenance equipment, the landscape maintenance equipment be electric-powered. The objective appears to be to reduce emissions in more-densely-populated areas, a worthy objective. Electric-powered equipment may sometimes be most appropriate. However, this strikes us as "going overboard" in prescribing

Utah State House																	
2026 Voting Summary																	
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Bill:	HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 245	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 464	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248	2026 Prelim	
GrassRoots Recommended Votes:	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Average	
Rep-Party	Dist	County(ies)															
Matt MacPherson-R	26	Salt Lake	a	Y	Y	N	y	a	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	92%
Cory Maloy-R	52	Utah	Y	a	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	92%
Ashlee Matthews-D	37	Salt Lake	a	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	a	a	y	y	9%
Verona Mauga-D	31	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	Y	y	y	21%
Grant Amjad Miller-D	24	Salt Lake	a	n	Y	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	n	y		y	8%
Tracy Miller-R	45	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	N	60%
Logan Monson-R	69	*	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	N	Y	N	N	71%
Carol Moss-D	34	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	n	N	a	21%
Hoang Nguyen-D	23	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	a	n	n	n	y	y	n	y	y	8%
Clinton Okerlund-R	42	Salt Lake	a	Y	Y	N	y	y	n	n	Y	a	y	Y	y	y	42%
Doug Owens-D	33	Salt Lake	n	n	n	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	n	y	y	0%
Nicholeen Peck-R	28	Tooele	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	N	a	86%
Mike Petersen-R	2	Cache	Y	Y	Y	N	y	a	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	N	N	85%
Karen Peterson-R	13	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	N	N	67%
Thomas Peterson-R	1	Box Elder, Cache	Y	Y	Y	a	y	N	Y	n	Y	y	a	Y	y	N	67%
Val Peterson-R	56	Utah	Y	a	Y	a	y	a	Y	a	a	y	N	Y	N	a	78%
Candice Pierucci-R	49	Salt Lake	a	Y	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	Y	a	a	91%
Calvin Roberts-R	46	Salt Lake	Y	Y	a	y	y	a	Y	a	Y	y	y	Y	y	N	55%
Angela Romero-D	25	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	y	n	Y	n	N	y	n	a	y	23%
Jake Sawyer-R	9	Weber	Y	Y	Y	N	y	N	n	Y	a	y	N	Y	y	N	69%
Mike Schultz-R	12	Weber/Davis	a	Y	Y	N	y	a	Y	a	Y	y	Y	Y	N	N	73%
David Shallenberger-R	58	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	a	Y	a	y	a	a	N	70%
Troy Shelley-R	66	Juab, Sanpete	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	Y	N	N	100%
Lisa Shepherd-R	61	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	N	N	79%
Rex Shipp-R	71	Iron	Y	Y	Y	N	a	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	100%
Casey Snider-R	5	Cache	a	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	a	y	a	Y	N	N	73%
Andrew Stoddard-D	40	Salt Lake	a	n	n	y	y	y	n	n	n	y	y	Y	y	y	8%
Mark Strong-R	47	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	N	a	N	Y	Y	Y	N	a	Y	N	N	100%
Jordan Teuscher-R	44	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	N	64%
Jason Thompson-R	3	Cache	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	a	Y	Y	a	y	Y	y	y	58%
Norman Thurston-R	62	Utah	a	n	n	N	y	a	n	Y	Y	y	N	Y	y	N	50%
Neil Walter-R	74	Washington	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	N	67%
Raymond Ward-R	19	Davis	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	n	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	N	57%
Christine Watkins-R	67	*	Y	Y	n	y	y	y	a	Y	a	y	y	Y	y	y	33%
Douglas Welton-R	65	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	57%
Stephen Whyte-R	63	Utah	Y	Y	Y	N	y	y	Y	n	Y	y	y	Y	N	N	64%
Ryan Wilcox-R	7	Weber	Y	Y	a	N	y	y	a	Y	Y	N	N	Y	y	N	75%
Bill:	HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 245	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 464	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248		
GrassRoots Recommended Vote:	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N		

*House District 67 includes Carbon, Duchesne, Emery, Grand Counties

*House District 69 includes Emery, Garfield, Grand, Kane, San Juan, Wayne

how people “on the ground” do their jobs. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the Senate (20-7-2), but failed the House (35-34-6).** (Note that, even though the bill had more YES votes than NO votes, it still failed the House, because there was not a constitutional majority (at least half of House membership, or 38) voting for it.)

SB180Sub1 (Sen Escamilla, Rep Clancy)
 Proposed to expand the definition of an eligible student under the school meal program to include a student “whose family

income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level”. This would be an unwarranted growth in government, and an inappropriate use of government force. A larger tax cut would be more appropriate. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the Senate (18-0-11), but failed the House Education Committee (3-6-6), and never came to a House floor vote.**

(Bill descriptions continued on Page 7)

Utah State Senate

2026 Voting Summary

Y or y="yes", N or n="no"; a=absent or not voting; Y or N=good vote; y or n=bad vote

Bills:			HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248	2026 Prelim Average
GrassRoots Recommended Votes:			Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	
Rep-Party	Dist	County(ies)														
Stuart Adams-R	7	Davis, Morgan	Y	Y	Y	a		Y	Y	y	y	Y	a	a	y	67%
Heidi Balderree-R	22	Salt Lake, Utah	Y	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	y	N	83%
Nate Blouin-D	13	Salt Lake	n	n	n	y		n	n	y	y	n	y	y	y	0%
Brady Brammer-R	21	Utah	Y	Y	a	y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	a	a	a	89%
Emily Buss-F	11	SL/UT/Tooele	n	a	n	y		n	Y	y	N	n	y	y	y	18%
Kirk Cullimore-R	19	Salt Lake, Utah	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	a	y	a	Y	y	a	y	50%
Luz Escamilla-D	10	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y	y	n	a	N	a	n	y	y	y	18%
Lincoln Fillmore-R	17	Salt Lake	n	Y	n	y	a	Y	Y	y	y	Y	N	y	N	50%
Keith Grover-R	23	Utah	n	Y	Y	y		Y	a	y	a	Y	y	y	N	50%
Wayne Harper-R	16	Salt Lake	Y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	N	y	Y	N	a	N	75%
David Hinkins-R	26	*	Y	Y	Y	N		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	y	64%
Don Ipson-R	29	Washington	n	Y	n	y		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	y	a	36%
John Johnson-R	3	*	Y	Y	Y	N		Y	Y	y	y	Y	N	y	N	75%
Karen Kwan-D	12	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y		n	n	N	y	n	y	y	y	17%
Dan McCay-R	18	Salt Lake, Utah	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	a	N	y	Y	N	y	N	75%
Mike McKell-R	25	Utah	n	Y	Y	y		a	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	y	40%
Ann Millner-R	5	*	Y	Y	n	y		a	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	N	50%
Calvin Musselman-R	4	Davis, Weber	Y	Y	Y	y		a	Y	N	y	Y	y	y	a	60%
Derrin Owens-R	27	*	n	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	N	55%
Stephanie Pitcher-D	14	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y		n	n	y	y	n	y	y	y	8%
Jen Plumb-D	9	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y		n	n	y	y	n	y	y	y	8%
Kathleen Riebe-D	15	Salt Lake	n	n	Y	y		n	n	N	y	n	y	y	y	17%
Scott Sandall-R	1	*	n	a	n	a		Y	Y	y	y	Y	N	a	N	56%
Jerry Stevenson-R	6	Davis	n	a	Y	y		Y	Y	y	a	Y	y	a	y	44%
Keven Stratton-R	24	Utah, Wasatch	Y	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	N	y	Y	N	y	y	67%
Evan Vickers-R	28	*	n	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	a	y	45%
Todd Weiler-R	8	Davis/Salt Lake	n	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	y	y	42%
Chris Wilson-R	2	Cache/Rich	n	Y	Y	y	a	Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	y	y	42%
Ronald Winterton-R	20	*	Y	Y	Y	y		Y	Y	y	y	Y	y	y	y	50%
Bill:			HB 85	HB 174	HB 195	HB 260	HB 263	HB 404	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	SB 176	SB 180	SB 248	
GrassRoots Recommended Vote:			Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	

*Senate District 1 includes Box Elder, Cache, Tooele

*Senate District 3 Includes Morgan, Summit, Weber

*Senate District 5 includes Davis, Morgan, Weber

*Senate District 20 includes Daggett, Duchesne, Summit, Uintah, Wasatch

*Senate District 26 includes Carbon, Emery, Garfield, Grand, Kane, San Juan, Utah, Wasatch, Wayne

*Senate District 27 includes Garfield, Juab, Kane, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, Utah, Washington, Wayne

*Senate District 28 includes Beaver, Iron, Juab, Millard, Washington Counties

Utah State "Governor"

2026 Bill Response Summary

Y or y=signed bill, N or n=vetoed bill; Y or N=good response; y or n=bad response

Bill:		HB 174	HB 195	HB 260	HB 404	HB 471	HB 502	HCR 6	SB 60	2026 Prelim Average
GrassRoots Recommended Vote:		Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	
Spencer Cox-R		Y	*	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	57%

*Became law without "Governor" signature

(Bill descriptions continued from Page 5)

SB248 (Sen Escamilla, Rep Loubet)

Proposed to enact the Employer-Based, State-Assisted Child Care Capacity Expansion Program “to expand available high quality child care in the state”, and to transfer \$3.74 million to the Department of Government Operations, the intent apparently being “to retrofit warehouse space in an existing State Tax Commission building into a childcare

facility.” If the state wants to sell surplus real estate or lease surplus space to a child-care provider (or any other business, for that matter), that is one thing. But the state should not get into the child care business, or be in a position of choosing winners and losers in the marketplace. This is social planning that we can do without. **GrassRoots favors a NO vote. Passed the Senate (17-9-3), but failed the House (25-47-3), and never came to a House floor vote.**

What of Affordability?

Much has been made of the issue of “affordability”. And we think that it is unfortunate that the solution offered is often more government interference with freedom and what remains of free markets. (For example, the Utah Housing Strategic Plan in response to our current problems with housing affordability. See our coverage of HCR6.) As previously mentioned, the latest state budget appears to propose \$9K of government spending per person, or \$36K per family of four. And this is not the entirety of the situation: it does not include most of the monies spent by the US government, nor much of what is spent by our local governments. Is all of this spending making the necessities of life more affordable for Utah residents? Or is it a net burden for most of us.

What of the hidden taxes? One of the largest hidden taxes is inflation, most of which can probably be traced to trillions of dollars of money printing by the Federal Reserve, which “helps” to finance our national debt, which is approaching \$40 trillion (about \$120K per US resident, assuming a population of 338 million, or about \$480K per family of four).

Another hidden tax is elevated interest rates. Of course, we should not expect zero interest rates; it only makes sense for people to lend to us if they can have a reasonable return on their investment. But, if our national debt is \$40 trillion, and our government is trying to borrow an additional \$2 trillion per year, all that demand for borrowing is likely to drive up interest rates.

Also, in addition to tax burdens, there are regulatory burdens, often making it harder for businesses to survive, and harder for people to make a living. We are not against every government regulation, but we would hope for such regulations to be limited to those that are truly well-calculated to help us, and that fall appropriately within the government’s role as Agent (not Master) of the People.

Another elephant stomping around in the room right now is War, which has substantially driven up costs of gasoline and other fuels, and other items coming out of the Middle East (nitrogen fertilizers and helium, for instance) in the past couple months. Further threats to important supply chains loom. We would hope that our Congress, our President and his advisers, and other leaders would consider carefully the costs and benefits (or lack thereof), and the moral justification (or lack thereof). Some disagreement is to be expected. That should not be feared. That is part of our historical greatness. What should be feared is a path with huge risks that is not adequately discussed or debated (and, we dare say, prayed about).

In many cases, it is a reasonable hypothesis that, in our current affordability problems, “Government is not the solution; it is the problem.”

Should our representatives read bills before passing them into law?

Some might scratch their heads, and say “What a stupid question? Of course they should!” But, for a variety of reasons, we are concerned that adequate reading and understanding of bills does not happen before passage into law. What are some possible reasons for this?

- The sheer volume of proposed legislation is huge. As previously mentioned, there were about 1020 numbered bills for this session on the Legislature’s website, some of them well over a hundred pages of not-quickly-understood jargon, with numerous cross-references to other sections of code. 542 of these bills passed the Legislature. Our representatives are human, and it is understandable if they do not read every bill in 45 days or even a year.
- Maybe the sponsor of a bill is a “friendly colleague”. Or maybe a representative wants the sponsor of a bill to vote for one or more of his own bills.
- Maybe legislative “leadership” is pushing hard for passage of a bill and even threatens punishment for those who will not vote for it. (Not sure this happened this year. We have heard reports of it in the past.)
- Maybe paid lobbyists representing monied interests and potential campaign contributors are pushing hard for a bill.
- The size and reach and power of government have grown so extensive that our representatives may think they need to delegate-and-trust like crazy to keep up with it all. Trust the paid lobbyists. Trust legislative leadership. Trust the government bureaucrats and the Governor. Trust the committee. Trust the “experts”. If the representative has not made time to read and understand the bill himself, then he may simply decide to trust one or more of these other entities.

It is understandable that we have ended up where we are, but that does not make it right. In fact, when our representatives vote for bills without adequately reading and understanding them, we believe this is a mockery of the principle of Representative Government.

The principle here seems pretty obvious. But it may take “the faith of a child” to say things like “The emperor has no clothes” or “I voted ‘no’ on that bill because I did not adequately understand it.”

There may be one Representative with such faith this year: Leah Hansen from Utah County. She reportedly promised constituents that she would not vote for bills that she had not read. And we have noticed literally dozens of bills that passed House and Senate unanimously, except for Representative Hansen’s NO vote. Some of these bills are quite long, like SB257, “Domestic Relations Amendments” (158 pages); and SB323, “Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recodification” (463 pages). Maybe good bills for all we know. But who knows? How many legislators actually read these bills?

If our representatives always vote “no” when they have not had (or made) time to read and understand a bill with due diligence, there may be some good bills that do not pass this session, but they can likely be brought up again at some future date. In the mean time, hopefully we already have the needed laws against murder, theft, and fraud to help us survive until then.

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