

2024 Legislative Report

GrassRoots

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

UtahGrassRoots.org

Annual Report on Utah's Legislature

April 2024

It's All Taxpayer Dollars

591.

The Utah Legislature passed 591 bills during the 2024 legislative session. That's over 13 bills per day during the 45-day session.

A legislature dedicated to limited government would not pass so many bills. Even Governor Spencer Cox chided the legislature for passing so many bills this session.

Yet in its rush to pass so many bills, the State Senate continued to be the body where "Good bills go to die." Included in this was H.B. 112 which removed sexuality from the definition of sex education instruction and H.B. 173 which would have put a check on the power of school boards to raise taxes. Both bills should not have been controversial.

The legislature did find time to put mechanisms in place to raise taxes by almost \$2 billion to fund the building of stadiums for NHL and MLB teams. In passing the bills the legislature used a familiar line that mostly out-of-state guests would pay via car rental taxes. Ignoring the fact that Utahns do indeed rent cars and because this has become a favored method of tax collection in other states, Utah citizens will pay the tax in other cities when they travel.

The legislature did pass bills that improved choice in education and gave a slight overall tax reduction.

Yet the rush to pass legislation (many of the bills that pass in the final days) gives concern.

Petersen Receives Top Overall Scores. Balderree Tops Senate.

House Summary: Mike Petersen (R-CA) received the top score in the House. Also scoring in the top 10% were Phil Lyman (R-SJ), Trevor Lee (DA), Ken Ivory (SL), Jason Kyle (R-WB), Mark Strong (R-SL), and Kay Christofferson (R-UT).

Senate Summary: Heidi Balderree (R-UT) received the top score in the Senate. Also finishing in the top 10% in the Senate were Mike Kennedy (R-UT), and John Johnson (R-WB).

Governor: Governor Cox received a 47%.

Averages: The House received an average score of 56% down from 60% last year. This is compared to the lifetime score of 45%. The Senate averaged 42% down from 48% last year. This is below the lifetime average of which is below the lifetime average of 47%.

What is GrassRoots?

GrassRoots has been issuing an annual legislative report card since 1992. The Constitutions of the nation and state are the guides that GrassRoots uses in picking issues for its legislative report card. Bills are picked without regard to any individual. GrassRoots has no paid staff.

Contents

Bills Summary.....	2-3
House.....	4-5
Senate & Governor.....	6
Rankings.....	7

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The tally of bills from each House is listed by Yeas, Nays, and those Absent or Not Voting. Bills are listed by number, with house bills listed first. The sponsor(s) of the bill are in parentheses, with the primary sponsor listed first. Text of all bills can be found at <http://le.utah.gov>.

A) **H.B. 13 (J. Dunnigan, K. Cullimore)** Provides for the creation of infrastructure financing districts (IFDs) empowered to impose taxes. The intent appears to be to make new housing more available and more affordable by making available municipal-bond-interest-rate financing for the construction of infrastructure. However, in our judgment, the process for establishing the IFD Board seems to make it substantively a private association with taxing powers (contrary to the Utah State Constitution, Article VI, Section 28). **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (64-6-5), Senate (24-3-2), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

B) **H.B. 29 (K. Ivory, T. Weiler)** Protects children by prioritizing protecting children from illicit pornography over other considerations in evaluating instructional material. If we are going to have a government school system, then we should exercise due diligence to ensure that it does not harm our children. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (52-18-5), Senate (19-8-2), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

C) **H.B. 68 (A. Stoddard, K. Grover)** Raises second-amendment concerns by enhancing the penalty if an individual is convicted of distributing drugs and also has a weapon accessible or distributes a firearm if an individual is convicted of distributing drugs and has a weapon accessible. We should be careful not to criminalize the bearing of arms. It is enough to criminalize and punish actual, underlying, criminal behavior. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (39-31-5), Senate (28-0-1), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

D) **H.B. 78 (J. Stenquist, R. Winterton)** Repeals the sunset date of a bill that incentivizes motion pictures for filming in rural Utah. Bill's fiscal note estimates that the tax incentives will amount to \$12 million per year. Creates an uneven playing field by favoring one business over another. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (47-22-6), Senate (19-8-2), and became law without the Governor's Signature.**

E) **H.B. 112 (T. Jimenez, K. Grover)** Removes human sexuality from the definition of sex education instruction. If we have a government school system that teaches students about various elements of human reproduction, it does not follow that we need the system to get involved in discussion (or even advocacy) of various doctrines about human sexuality. We can and should leave that to loving parents. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (47-14-14) but did not come up for a vote in the Senate.**

F) **H.B. 165 (T. Lee, M. Kennedy)** Requires a federal officer to follow certain procedures, including providing three business days prior notice to Utah's Attorney General and the county sheriff, before releasing an illegal alien within the state. One of the proper roles of government is to protect our borders. Bill also protects the 10th Amendment rights of the state when the federal government fails in one of its proper roles. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (63-11-1), Senate (22-7-0), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

G) **H.B. 173 (C. Pierucci, M. Kennedy)** Provides that a law passed by a local school board that increases a tax or imposes a new tax may be referred to the voters of the school district for the voters' approval or rejection. "The power to tax is the power to destroy". This bill is an appropriate check on this power to destroy. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (42-28-5) but did not come up for a vote in the Senate.**

H) **H.B. 182 (K. Lisonbee, K. Grover)** Protects parental rights by requiring parental consent for certain surveys to be given to a student. Many surveys given to our students are unnecessary and intrude on privacy rights. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (57-11-7), Senate (25-0-4), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

I) **H.B. 193 (R. Ward, M. McKell)** Continues the expansion of government by extending the inpatient hospital assessment repeal date and the Medicaid expansion hospital assessment repeal date by 10 years. Providing health care is not the proper role of government, and this bill excessively extends the time the state is involved in something it should not be involved in. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (73-2-0), Senate (24-2-3) and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

J) **H.B. 261 (K. Hall, K. Grover)** This bill prohibits government employers (including institutions of higher education and the public education system) from engaging in certain discriminatory practices and from establishing or maintaining offices that promote discrimination. The Declaration of Independence declares that "all men are created equal". One of the fundamental principles of sound government is that should be treated equally under the law. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (60-14-1), Senate (23-6-0) and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

K) **H.B. 269 (M. Petersen, D. McCay)** Adds the Ten Commandments and Magna Carta to the list of historical documents and principles that school curricula and activities may include for a thorough study. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (49-16-10), Senate (20-4-5) and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

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L) H.B. 478 (N. Thurston, J. Plumb) Authorizes the Department of Agriculture to impose civil penalties relating to animal cruelty. While GrassRoots does not approve of animal cruelty, we should not empower executive entities (like the Department of Agriculture) to exercise judicial powers (imposing punishment). (See Utah State Constitution, Article V, Section 1.) Allowing unelected bureaucrats to impose fines of up to \$500 when the US Constitution allows a trial by jury appears to violate fundamental rights and would appear to circumvent due process in general and jury trial. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (59-10-6), Senate (18-5-6), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

M) H.B. 505 (J. Briscoe) Estimated to increase government spending by over \$900,000 to create the Property Loss Related to Homelessness Compensation Fund. This bill grows the government by creating a committee and hiring staff. This is not an appropriate use of government force. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Failed in the House (28-44-3).**

N) H.B. 562 (R. Wilcox, L. Fillmore) Creates the Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District. As part of the district it provides for a resort community sales and use tax and a rental car tax, and other taxes. The bill is estimated to increase government spending by almost \$4 million in FY2025 and by more than \$2 million in FY2026. The money will be directed toward building a stadium should the state be awarded a Major League Baseball team. This is an example of corporatism with the government supporting private business with taxpayer dollars. This is not the proper role of government. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (51-21-3), Senate (25-4-0), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

O) S.B. 13 (L. Fillmore, S. Gricius) Increases competition in education as it requires counties and municipalities to consider a home-based micro school and micro-education entity as a permitted use in all zoning districts. All too many elected officials are opposed to creating competition in education and this bill prevents them from using zoning ordinances to prevent parents from having a choice in their children's education. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (63-6-6), Senate (23-5-1), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

P) S.B. 56 (K. Grover, J. Hawkins) Improves educational choice by removing a notary requirement on a home school affidavit. While this may seem like a small step, we applaud the legislature for removing red tape from parents who choose to home-school their children. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (66-1-8), Senate (29-0-0), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

Q) S.B. 69 (C. Wilson, K. Christofferson) Reduces the individual income tax rate and corporate franchise tax rates each by .10%. As noted previously, the power to tax is the power to destroy. GrassRoots encourages further tax reductions in the future, as this is a great way to limit the size of government. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (63-11-1), Senate (23-6-0), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

R) S.B. 144 (A. Millner, J. Hawkins) Authorizes the Division of Arts and Museums to offer a qualifying county of the first class, or a municipality in a county of the first class, a dollar-for-dollar state match on local funding for the purchase or commission of a public art installation. Funding public art is not a proper role of government. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (50-23-2), Senate (27-0-2), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

S) S.B. 176 (L. Escamilla, R. Spendlove) Projected to increase government spending by \$2.1 million. Creates the Child Care Capacity Expansion Act. One of the purposes of the bill is to identify obsolete state-owned buildings and turn them into childcare facilities. Providing childcare is not a proper role of government. Obsolete state buildings should be sold and the revenue returned to the taxpayers in this state. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the Senate (25-0-4) but failed in the House (27-43-5).**

T) S.B. 181 (L. Escamilla, C. Watkins) Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to apply for a Medicaid waiver related to traditional healing services. Increases government spending by \$2.6 million in FY 2026. Healthcare is not a proper role of government. Programs like this extend the federal deficit which is almost \$35 trillion, and keep taxes high. **GrassRoots approves of a No vote. Passed the House (43-23-9), Senate (22-0-7), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

U) S.B. 195 (D. McCay, J. Hawkins) Makes water data regarding golf courses a protected record under the Government Records Access and Management Act. The government has increasingly monitored the water usage of private citizens, why should the government be able to hide its water usage? **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the Senate (26-0-3) but failed in the House (17-49-9)**

V) S.B. 206 (A. Millner, V. Peterson) Increases government spending by \$3.3 million in 2025 and \$1.3 million in 2026 by creating the One Utah Service Fellowship Program. Charities should be directing service efforts and volunteering should not involve government money. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (43-27-5), Senate (26-0-3), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

W) S.B. 214 (D. Hinkins, T. Lee) Removes the provision that requires a municipality or county to adopt a resolution to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030. The removed provision is an unfunded mandate for local government. Repealing the requirement was the right thing to do. **GrassRoots approves of a YES vote. Passed the House (70-2-3), Senate (26-0-3), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

X) S.B. 272 (D. McCay, J. Hawkins) Authorizes local governments to levy sales and use tax within the Capital City Revitalization Zone to build a new stadium for an NHL hockey team. As with the taxes to build a Major League Baseball team, this is an example of corporatism and an example of the government playing favorites. **GrassRoots approves of a NO vote. Passed the House (50-20-5), Senate (22-4-3), and was Signed into law by the Governor.**

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Utah State Senate			2024 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	2024 Score	Lifetime Score	HB 13	HB 29	HB 68	HB 78	HB 165	HB 182	HB 193	HB 261	HB 269	HB 478	HB 562	SB 13	SB 56	SB 69	SB 144	SB 176	SB 181	SB 195	SB 206	SB 214	SB 272			
Rep-Party	Dist	County(ies)	GrassRoots Recommended Votes																							
Stuart Adams-R	7	Davis	42%	48%	y	Y	y	y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	a	y	y	Y	y	
Heidi Baldersee-R	22	Salt Lake, Utah	71%	71%	N	Y	y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	y	y	a	y	y	Y	N	
Nate Blouin-D	13	Salt Lake	14%	12%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	n	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	y	y	y	Y	y	
Curtis Bramble-R	24	Utah/Wasatch	45%	52%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Gregg Buxton-R	4	Davis/Weber	43%	38%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Kirk Cullimore-R	19	Salt Lake	50%	48%	y	Y	a	a	Y	Y	y	Y	a	a	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	a	Y	y	
Luz Escamilla-D	10	Salt Lake	14%	18%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	n	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Lincoln Fillmore-R	17	Salt Lake	52%	56%	y	Y	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Keith Grover-R	23	Utah	50%	63%	y	a	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	a	a	y	Y	Y	Y	y	a	a	y	Y	Y	y	
Wayne Harper-R	16	Salt Lake	58%	60%	a	Y	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	a	
David Hinkins-R	26	*	40%	52%	y	n	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	a	
Don Ipson-R	29	Washington	44%	44%	y	Y	y	y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	a	a	a	Y	a	y	
John Johnson-R	3	*	67%	71%	N	Y	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	N	
Mike Kennedy-R	21	Utah	68%	70%	N	Y	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	a	N	N	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	a	Y	Y	N	
Karen Kwan-D	12	Salt Lake	14%	10%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	n	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Dan McCay-R	18	Salt Lake, Utah	60%	74%	y	Y	y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	a	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	y	
Mike McKell-R	25	Utah	47%	56%	y	Y	y	a	Y	Y	y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	
Ann Miller-R	5	*	56%	38%	a	Y	y	y	Y	Y	a	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	a	a	y	Y	Y	a	
Derrin Owens-R	27	*	45%	47%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	a	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Stephanie Pitcher-D	14	Salt Lake	11%	10%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	a	y	y	a	Y	n	y	y	y	y	a	Y	y	
Jen Plumb-D	9	Salt Lake	15%	8%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	a	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Kathleen Riebe-D	15	Salt Lake	14%	17%	y	n	y	y	n	Y	y	n	n	y	y	n	Y	n	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Scott Sandall-R	1	*	45%	46%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	a	a	y	Y	Y	y	
Jerry Stevenson-R	6	Davis	50%	44%	y	Y	y	y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	a	a	a	a	a	Y	a	y	
Daniel Thatcher-R	11	SL/Tooele	44%	42%	y	a	y	y	n	a	a	Y	Y	a	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	a	Y	N	y	
Evan Vickers-R	28	*	43%	47%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Todd Weiler-R	8	Davis/Salt Lake	50%	39%	y	Y	y	N	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	a	y	y	Y	Y	y	
Chris Wilson-R	2	Cache/Rich	43%	51%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	
Ronald Winterton-R	20	*	40%	45%	y	n	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	
GrassRoots Recommended Votes			2024 Score	Lifetime Score	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N		
Bills	2024 Score	Lifetime Score	HB 13	HB 29	HB 68	HB 78	HB 165	HB 182	HB 193	HB 261	HB 269	HB 478	HB 562	SB 13	SB 56	SB 69	SB 144	SB 176	SB 181	SB 195	SB 206	SB 214	SB 272			
Spencer Cox-R	47%	46%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y			

*Senate District 1 includes Box Elder, Cache, Tooele
 *Senate District 3 includes Morgan, Summit, Weber
 *Senate District 20 includes Daggett, Duchesne, Summit, Uintah, Wasatch
 *Senate District 26 includes Carbon, Emery, San Juan, Utah, Wasatch, Grand
 *Senate District 27 includes Beaver, Garfield, Juab, Kane, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevierr, Utah, Wayne
 *Senate District 28 includes Beaver, Iron, Washington Counties

Governor	2024 Score	Lifetime Score	HB 13	HB 29	HB 68	HB 78	HB 165	HB 182	HB 193	HB 261	HB 269	HB 478	HB 562	SB 13	SB 56	SB 69	SB 144	SB 176	SB 181	SB 195	SB 206	SB 214	SB 272
Spencer Cox-R	47%	46%	y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y	y	y	Y	Y	Y	y

Good Vote
Top 10%
Bottom 10%

Liberty Quotes

Freedom is not a gift bestowed upon us by other men, but a right that belongs to us by the laws of God and Nature. Benjamin Franklin

It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon the supposition he may abuse it. George Washington

Liberty is not collective, it is personal. All liberty is individual liberty. Calvin Coolidge

You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make a good use of it. John Adams

Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety. Benjamin Franklin

Most bad government has grown out of too much government. Thomas Jefferson

"THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated" Thomas [Paine](#)