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UTAH LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Weekly Legislative Session Newsletter of RRJ Consulting
Utah's Leading Lobbying Firm



WEEK ONE

Welcome to the 2023 General Legislative Session where lawmakers meet for 45 days to consider, debate, and pass policies that will impact Utahns statewide. On average, over 1,000 bills will be considered and about 500 will become law. While a busy time of year, we always look forward to the hustle and excitement of meeting with lawmakers and watching the legislative process firsthand.

STATE BUDGET

As discussed in November's newsletter, the state budget is one of the most critical aspects of the legislative session each year. Lawmakers must pass and balance a \$26+ billion budget, deciding which programs and needs are most critical to the state's success. We will be watching appropriations committees closely as lawmakers determine how to spend an unprecedented surplus – an additional \$130.2 million in the General Fund and \$1.235 billion in the Income Tax Fund. We'll also be watching closely as legislative leadership and the Governor have highlighted their desires to provide another historic tax cut for the people of Utah.

OPENING DAY

On Tuesday, President J. Stuart Adams and Speaker Brad Wilson addressed their respective bodies. They both spoke of the critical issues facing our state and the great opportunities before us. Speaker Wilson said, "I cannot say it more clearly - and I don't think it is hyperbole... The decisions we will make this session will define Utah's next decade and beyond!" This will be an historic session and we are excited to be a part of it.

STATE OF THE STATE

Governor Spencer J. Cox also addressed the Legislature and the people of Utah this week in the annual State of the State address. Governor Cox focused his remarks toward the rising generations and invited young guests to fill the audience. He said, "The future of our state is not written in the stars. It is for us... to dictate our destiny... To anyone who believes that the next generation in Utah will be worse off than their parents, my message is simple: not now, not on our watch."

POLICY HIGHLIGHT

H.B. 215 FUNDING FOR TEACHER SALARIES AND OPTIONAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

This week, the House of Representatives passed H.B. 215 *Funding for Teacher Salaries and Optional Education Opportunities*, sponsored by Rep. Candice Pierucci. H.B. 215 does two notable things:

- 1) **Increases teacher compensation by \$6,000**
- 2) **Gives parents and students additional education opportunities.**

A recent legislative audit found that 42% of Utah teachers leave within the first five years in the profession, hindering student stability and success. Providing teachers with their largest pay raise is historic and greatly needed. Additionally, many parents have expressed the need for additional options to support their students' learning style and abilities. H.B. 215 creates a scholarship program that, if received, parents could use funds toward private school tuition, tutoring, homeschooling materials, classroom supplies, transportation costs, technical college fees, and more.

H.B. 215 will be considered and debated in the Senate Education Committee next week and if passed, on the Senate floor.



With experience that no other lobbying firm in Utah has and influential relationships throughout state government to effectively communicate our clients' needs and positions, RRJ knows how to accomplish agendas and deliver real results. Whether it is defeating legislation and bills presumed too popular to beat, overriding a governor's veto, negotiating compromises, quietly passing controversial statutory changes, resurrecting defeated bills during the last day of the session, securing multi-million dollar appropriations, or simply passing legislation, RRJ has done it —and more. Thank you for letting us represent you and please reach out if there is every anything we can do for you. We will have your backs this session for fight for policies to benefit you and your businesses.

Sincerely,

Rob, Jodi, and Chris

