Utah’s growth
Today’s actions create tomorrow’s future

SALT LAKE CHAMBER’S 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
Our daily routines are, in some way, a direct result of our state’s tremendous growth; and across our communities, whether consciously or subconsciously, we all feel its effects.

Transportation, economic development, education, business climate, housing, health care, and environment—research consistently determines these issues as some of the most important to us, and at their core, each comes down to our overall quality of life. This means that now more than ever, our life quality is directly determined by the way our communities grow.

For some, growth connotes negativity; a sense that their community is changing too quickly and the growing pains seem increasingly acute. Others share excitement about the economic opportunity growth provides. Despite differences of sentiment, Utahns can all agree that more should and can be done to prepare for our state’s continued growth.

The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute projects that our population will increase to just under 6 million, close to double the current population, over the next 50 years. This is why lawmakers, business leaders, local governments, and all Utahns must focus on addressing our state’s growth in a holistic way—today. Change and growth are inevitable, but smart planning is not.

We must employ the “Utah Way” and work more collaboratively than ever before to broaden the thinking and break down the silos between public policy issues. This publication reflects this way of thinking by viewing every issue as interconnected and growth-related. For example, conversations surrounding the future of infrastructure and transportation cannot be independently successful if land use, housing affordability and economic development are not included or considered in the process.

Utah’s business community is uniquely prepared to lead the charge for smart growth and planning. Business leaders understand the economic impacts of growth and its effect on employee recruitment and retention, housing affordability and workforce development, to name a few. History proves that when the Salt Lake Chamber coalesces around an issue, business leaders answer the call.

Utah’s business community represents the action takers, thought leaders and community builders who are dedicated to ensuring every aspect of our state is prepared for growth. Over the years, the Chamber has sketched an economic blueprint, painted in the details, and thought big about our future. Now it is time to execute our plan. We are committed to continue our strong public and private sector partnerships and use relevant, good data from organizations in our community to help support informed decisions and advance our growth-centered priorities.

With smart planning, our future growth can and will be viewed in a positive light. Preparing for growth is a force for increased collaboration to build thriving communities, improve our economic prosperity, advance Utah’s innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and cultivate tomorrow’s leaders. Making this vision a reality will require legislators to enact creative and collaborative solutions, businesses to understand and advocate for the big picture, and all Utahns to work together to ensure our state remains the best place to live, work, learn and play.
BUSINESS CLIMATE
Utah is consistently recognized as one of the nation’s most diverse and highest-performing economies. The state’s business climate is the foundation of our prosperity, and in order for Utah to remain strong in this time of growth, legislators must reevaluate and modernize policies that are critical to the business community’s long-term success. It’s time to advance a bold, action-oriented strategy that will modernize our tax code, develop our workforce and improve economic development. A modern economy has left Utah’s tax code behind and, with it, the flexibility to make strategic decisions about our state’s future. We must implement an updated, balanced approach to tax policy that can provide a strong path forward for our state’s economic vitality. Now is the time to broaden the base and lower the rate.

Through the years, policymakers have been successful in helping to create the flourishing business climate Utahns enjoy today. However, as Utah continues to grow and evolve, so must our tax policies and incentives programs.

Steve Starks, President, Larry H. Miller Sports and Entertainment

Our economy and population have changed dramatically since the 1980’s, but our tax system has not. Utah’s budget is comprised of three main revenue sources: property tax, income tax and sales tax. Sales tax, the most flexible revenue source to meet our state’s changing needs, currently accounts for 88 cents of every dollar in the Utah’s general fund. However, with taxable sales as a percent of the economy shrinking, critical budget decisions will be an increasing challenge. Actions to create balance between revenue sources will provide a stable foundation for our economy to thrive.

* Includes local property taxes supporting public education
** All state tax collections. Including earmarks.

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
RISE OF THE SERVICE ECONOMY

Over the last several decades, the number of businesses in the service sector of our economy has grown at an incredible rate. Whether it is the subscription app on your phone, the rideshare you take around town or the haircut you get, services today make up a larger share of Utahns purchases than ever before, creating an erosion of the state’s sales tax base. Over time, a declining tax base creates a complex and inefficient budgeting process that dismantles the state’s fiscal stability. If we continue to delay tax reform, it will only get more difficult.

SHARE OF CONSUMER SPENDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Goods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

TAX BURDEN

While Utah’s average combined state and local sales tax rate is in the bottom third of western states, our total tax burden is already relatively high compared to our neighboring states.

RAISING THE SALES TAX RATE IS NOT THE ANSWER

While raising the sales tax rate may appear to address Utah’s imbalanced tax structure, it is not the right solution for our long-term economic stability.

A higher tax rate:
- Is a short-term fix to an increasingly complex problem
- Has the potential to diminish Utah’s economic competitiveness
- Impacts individual Utahns’ quality of life and disproportionately burdens low-income earners

legislative priorities

We support broadening the sales tax base and lowering the rate to ensure Utah has a modern tax code to match our modern economy.

We support the evaluation and modification of the current sales tax distribution formula recognizing that tax policy impacts development patterns.
Since 2008, state leaders have been focused on attracting and recruiting companies and incentivizing business growth across Utah. The dedication to achieving this increased economic development has proven successful, evidenced by the outcomes of the Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) program.

**SINCE 2008, THE EDTIF PROGRAM HAS HELPED**

- GROWTH OR RETENTION OF NEARLY 100 COMPANIES
- CREATION OF OVER 20,000 JOBS
- PROVIDED $312.7 MILLION IN NEW STATE REVENUE AFTER TAX REBATES

**raising the bar on incentives**

The EDTIF program, coupled with a thriving business climate, has put Utah on the map as one of the country’s best states for business. Tax incentives have been, and will always be, an important factor in the site selection process, but as Utah continues to grow, these incentives should move toward solving problems and encouraging positive outcomes for our communities and the people of Utah. It is time to modernize our tax incentives program to focus on attracting future-oriented firms and export-centered businesses. Incentive programs should assist existing businesses to grow into global headquarters and stimulate investment into workforce development and talent attraction.

Source: Governor’s Office of Economic Development 2018 Annual Report
We support reforming and modernizing corporate incentive programs to focus on the immediate need of workforce development and talent recruitment.

We support the alignment of state and local economic development incentives that take into account existing transportation infrastructure, land use and workforce demands.
**Building Rural Utah**

**Rural Economic Development Incentive Programs**

In 2017, Governor Herbert challenged Utah businesses to create 25,000 new jobs in rural Utah by 2020. This initiative recognizes that the economic prosperity experienced along the Wasatch Front is not reaching all Utah communities. To address this, the Governor’s Office Economic Development houses eight incentive programs to foster job creation and capital investment in rural communities.

| **5** | address job creation* |
| **4** | address capital investment* |
| **1** | addresses community economic development activities |

*Three of these programs address both job creation and capital investment.

**More Efficiency = More Impact**

Collective impact thinking and framework for Utah’s rural incentive programs will help to streamline efforts and provide more value for rural businesses.

**Legislative Priorities**

- We support a comprehensive evaluation of all existing rural economic development incentives in order to improve effectiveness and reduce potential duplications.
- We support stimulating rural economic development by building and improving infrastructure in key locations to attract immediate business investment.

**Shovel-Ready Site Development**

In rural Utah, challenges with job creation and capital investment are connected to the high cost of infrastructure. This is true for both out-of-state companies and community businesses. Providing newly-constructed or modified facilities for immediate business expansion or attraction will empower rural communities to pursue a greater number of economic development opportunities.
Not only does our economy continually rank as one of the top in the nation, but Utah is also the fastest growing state in America. While growth presents many exciting opportunities for Utahns, it also comes with distinct challenges, especially as it relates to meeting workforce demand. As our state’s population and economy continue to grow, it is essential that we focus on building a talented workforce. Industry, education and government must work collaboratively to ensure Utah’s students are college and career ready. This includes ensuring access to post-secondary education including universities and technical colleges and on-the-job learning opportunities through pathway programs.

**PATHWAYS PROGRAMS**

Through Utah’s Career Pathway programs, the state identifies talent shortages within the economy and creates strategic partnerships bringing industry and education together. These programs demonstrate the role business plays in driving the workforce of tomorrow through education and hands-on learning experiences.

**DIESEL TECH PATHWAYS**

*Business Partners:* Boeing, Janicki, Hexcel, Hill Air Force Base, Orbital ATK, Albany Engineered Composites (AEC), Kihomac

**UTAH AEROSPACE PATHWAYS**


Source: Talent Ready Utah
NEEDED
COMPUTER
SCIENCE IN
UTAH SCHOOLS

MEDICAL
INNOVATIONS PATHWAYS

Business Partners: BD Sandy, Biomerics, Edwards Lifesciences, Fresenius Medical Care, GE Healthcare Surgery, Merit Medical, Nelson Laboratories, Sorenson Forensics, Stryker, Varex Imaging

TECH PATHWAYS

Business Partners: Banyan, Dell EMC, DOMO, InsideSales.com, Instructure, Microsoft, NUVI, Pluralsight, Qualtrics

CONSTRUCTION PATHWAYS

Utah’s construction industry is struggling to find skilled workers, impacting our state’s continued growth and economic development. Building a talent pipeline within this industry is critical to our future.

PATHWAY UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Computers & software are changing everything

90% of parents want their child to study computer science

Technology affects every field

However, the majority of Utah schools don’t teach computer science

Source: Gallup, Inc.

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40% of Utah schools teach computer science

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Source: Gallup, Inc.
Utah’s business community recognizes the need for quality education to build a talented workforce and support a strong economy. By participating in advisory boards or similar committees, the private sector can help Utah’s high school CTE programs, technical colleges, community colleges and universities align new degrees, certificates and programs with industry needs.

“

Our company serves on many higher education and technical college advisory boards. This involvement has given us an advantage as we help to shape and influence the curriculum students learn that directly meet workforce demands.

Todd A. Hughes, President, Hughes General Contractors

business involvement creates greater workforce outcomes

Talent Ready Utah supports businesses as they become involved with education in activities such as job shadows, internships, donations, industry tours and in-classroom presentations.

legislative priorities

We support immediate action to begin an industry-led Construction Career Pathway that meets the immense workforce demands of the construction industry.

We support ongoing funding for the Build to Success program.

We support ongoing investment for a statewide college access advisor program to help increase the number of high school graduates enrolling in college.

We support aligning corporate incentives to put a focus on workforce development.

We support updating our state’s education system to include access to high-quality computer science education for every student.
Nowhere is Utah’s growth more pronounced than within the housing market. For the first time in 40 years, Utah has more families than our current supply of housing. Supply is not keeping pace with demand resulting in a shortage of over 54,000 housing units. This housing gap has left many Utah families struggling to find housing options that are affordable. Our state’s current home prices are 20% higher than comparable cities like Boise, Las Vegas and Phoenix; some of Utah’s top competitors in attracting new jobs and businesses. If left unaddressed, this housing affordability challenge will become a crisis.

WHERE IS THE GROWTH COMING FROM?

Utah’s population is growing faster than any other state, but unlike other rapidly growing states, Utah’s growth has been driven primarily by births rather than in-migration. Moving forward, trends indicate that in-migration will steadily increase to become a larger share of the state’s total growth.

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
SKYROCKETING CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIAL COSTS

The cost of construction materials has climbed 7.4% over the past year. This ongoing increase in hard costs, due partly to current tariffs, means the increase in costs will likely be passed on to the consumer.

LOCAL POLICIES LIMIT HOUSING PROJECTS

The real impact on housing affordability starts with communities. Local officials are key to implementing informed land use policies that keep housing affordable in their communities. With limited developable land, these local policy decisions should incorporate density whether by apartments, mixed-use developments or smaller lots.

NOT IN MY BACKYARD

The inability to zone and make the needed land use decisions on a local level is often a result of residents’ opposition to change and growth. However, new housing developments will be necessary when these residents’ children and grandchildren enter the housing market.

Dwindling Construction and Trades Labor

For every five individuals retiring from the construction and trade labor force, only one replacement is being trained. This strained workforce creates risk for the homebuilding industry and results in increased housing prices.

Components of the Housing Affordability Problem

54,000

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Skyrocketing Construction and Material Costs

The cost of construction materials has climbed 7.4% over the past year. This ongoing increase in hard costs, due partly to current tariffs, means the increase in costs will likely be passed on to the consumer.
Established in May of 2018, the Housing GAP Coalition is addressing the challenges associated with housing affordability to ensure that the American Dream is kept alive for all Utahns by providing access to a variety of housing types for all income groups. This Salt Lake Chamber initiative brings together the state’s brightest minds from business, academia and government to tackle this very real threat to our long-term economic prosperity.

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**legislative priorities**

- We support programs that provide technical assistance to local communities as they plan for growth, specifically the connection between transportation and land use.
- We support ongoing funding for public awareness efforts regarding Utah’s housing gap and the need for positive, smart growth.
- We support municipalities taking action to use, and be compliant with, their moderate-income housing plans.
- We support incentivizing transit-oriented, mixed-use developments that make smart use of land and allow residents to live in walkable, accessible communities.
- We support clarifying Utah’s referendum laws to provide certainty for developers, cities and residents.
- We support the evaluation and modification of the current sales tax distribution formula recognizing that tax policy impacts development patterns.
- We support initiatives and workforce development efforts that address the state’s ongoing construction and trade labor shortage.

“Utah’s looming housing affordability crisis is a great threat to our economic prosperity. Without a variety of housing options for our employees and their families, it’s possible they may choose to take their talent elsewhere. At WCF Insurance, we want our employees and their children and grandchildren to stay here, contribute to our workforce and continue to enjoy our state’s stellar quality of life.”

Ray Pickup, President & CEO, WCF Insurance
Utah’s economy does not stand still and neither can investment in our multimodal transportation system. Our ability to move people and goods efficiently, affordably and reliably is vital to our state’s economic prosperity. As the demand for moving both people and freight increases and changes, we must continue to improve the planning and management of our transportation infrastructure.

With the support and engagement of many stakeholders, the Legislature has made significant progress to improve transportation policy and governance and align investment with Utah’s long-term transportation needs. It is imperative that we continue this legacy of economic leadership through stewardship of the state’s financial resources to make a disciplined investment in our entire transportation network. Continued innovation and investment will ensure we keep Utah moving.

The Unified Plan comprehensively prioritizes investments needed now and in the future. This plan will improve safety, decrease harmful emissions, increase access to jobs, provide affordable convenient ways to get around and facilitate the movement of goods and people.
As vehicles become more efficient, Utah’s gas tax revenue, which primarily funds transportation projects, will significantly decrease. Therefore, Utah must explore innovative approaches to increase revenue for transportation. One such approach is road-user charges which link a driver’s actual use of the roadway to transportation taxes as compared to traditional fuel taxes.

Linking a transportation tax to vehicle miles traveled represents a shift to a true user fee. As Utah vehicle miles traveled is projected to increase over the next 20 years, road-user charges could potentially eliminate the need for a gas tax altogether by charging drivers on a per-mile-driven basis.

Transportation is essential for Utah’s economy and is a top concern for Adobe’s office in Utah. Having a variety of transportation options available gives people the freedom to do what they want, when they want and how they want. We must invest, maintain and advance our multimodal transportation system to ensure Utah remains the optimal location to live and do business.

Wade Sherman, Vice President of the Experience Cloud Legal Group, Adobe
When planning for transportation projects, a focus on land use and economic development is pivotal to a community’s success. Doing so will provide access to existing, emerging and future job centers, reduce congestion and improve housing affordability.

The Transportation and Land Use Connection (TLC) program, through the Wasatch Front Regional Council, provides technical assistance to local communities to help them achieve their goals and plan for growth. The program helps communities implement changes to the built environment that reduce traffic on roads and enable more people to easily walk, bike and use transit.

**legislative priorities**

- We support continued investment in our state’s multimodal transportation network to address capacity expansion, maintenance and operation of Utah’s significant transportation assets.
- We support users bearing the primary responsibility for funding Utah’s transportation infrastructure.
- We support exploring alternative measures for funding Utah’s transportation infrastructure including tolling and public-private partnerships.
- We support programs that provide technical assistance to local communities as they plan for growth, specifically the connection between transportation and land use.
- We support tying the eligibility for the expenditure of state transportation funding to local governments’ compliance with their moderate-income housing plans.
- We support encouraging local governments to plan and zone for mixed-used, multifamily housing in coordination with high-capacity transportation and transit service. We also support requiring local governments to consider long-range regional transportation plans as they develop their general plans and make zoning decisions.
ENVIRONMENT
MOVING THE NEEDLE
Over the past decade, Utah has made great strides to significantly reduce emissions and improve our air quality, but more still needs to be done. Without significant emissions reductions, Utah’s economic growth and quality of life will be stunted by poor air. It is crucial that all Utahns take responsibility for their actions and play a role in being part of the solution. Working to find a balance between implementing emissions reductions strategies and maintaining our business-friendly environment is key.

39% AREA SOURCES
Area source air pollution includes small pollution sources such as homes, businesses and commercial buildings.

Envision Utah projects that by 2050, homes and businesses will replace vehicles as the primary producers of pollution at 63%. In order to reduce emissions, homeowners and businesses will need to reduce their energy consumption and boost their building’s energy performance.

did you know?
ON A RED AIR DAY, 15% OF AREA SOURCES COME FROM WOOD BURNING

One wood burning stove can release the same amount of pollution as five dirty diesel buses.

Less than .00003% of Utahns use a wood stove or fireplace as their primary source of heat. However, thousands of Utah homes have a wood burning stove or fireplace as a secondary heat source. Currently, on a red air day, wood burning makes up 15% of total area source emissions. This demonstrates the need for additional enforcement on red air days.

13% POINT SOURCES
Point source air pollution is a single identifiable industry source of pollution and makes up the smallest percentage of impact.
DOING YOUR PART

Individuals and businesses can reduce their emissions by participating in the Clear the Air Challenge. In partnership with UCAIR and TravelWise, the Salt Lake Chamber hosts the annual Clear the Air Challenge in February, when winter inversions are often at their worst. Reducing vehicle trips by choosing TravelWise strategies will ultimately help improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and conserve energy in Utah.

“Our company and employees recognize the impact air quality has on our health and our overall quality of life. Together, we strive to address the issue and do our part to reduce emissions by participating in the Clear the Air Challenge, offering flexible work schedules and transit reimbursement, and encouraging our employees to TravelWise by carpooling to meetings or biking to work.”

Dave Smith, President, Penna Powers

48% MOBILE SOURCES

Mobile source air pollution includes pollution emitted by motor vehicles.

legislative priorities

- We support increased enforcement on mandatory non-wood burning days.
- We support investment for wood burning change outs specifically targeted to geographic areas that are disproportionately affected by the air pollution.
- We support targeted efforts to assist home and building owners to become more energy efficient.
As the second driest state in the nation, the future of our water supply and quality are paramount. Population growth leads to changing water needs, so Utahns must take steps to be more efficient and optimize our water use to keep up with demand. One crucial step to better optimizing our water is through secondary metering. Conservation among un-metered secondary water users is one of the greatest opportunities for water resource development. Secondary metering ensures current water supply can be managed more effectively to meet the real and projected need.

**WATER RATES**

Utah’s water rates are the lowest in the western United States. This is a result of geography, high water quality and water management by public agencies. However, as infrastructure continues to age and our population booms, low water rates are not sustainable. Price signal efforts should be made to achieve more efficient water use.

- **60-65% of municipal water is used for landscaping**
- **With an average of 4,000 gallons of water used per cycle with a 10 zone sprinkler system**
- **Equaling 50,000 gallons of water used per month when watering three times a week**
- **In comparison, the average family indoor use is 8,000-10,000 gallons per month**
- **If a secondary water meter is installed, there is a 30-40% reduction in outdoor water use**

Information based on a family of four using 100 gallons per person, per day.
We support the development and funding of Utah’s recreational assets, including additional facilities to meet growing demands, while improving outdoor access for residents and addressing infrastructure needs.

Whether it is the red rocks of southern Utah or the snow capped slopes of the Wasatch Front, Utah’s outdoor recreation assets not only allow millions of visitors to enjoy the beauty of our state and contribute to our revenue stream, but also create an unrivaled sense of place where employees want to live, work and play.

**UTAH TOURISM IN 2017**

- UTAH VISITORS SPENT $9.15 BILLION
- WHICH SUPPORTED 147,800 JOBS
- RESULTING IN $1.34 BILLION IN STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUE
- RELIEVING EACH UTAH HOUSEHOLD OF $1,375 IN TAXES

*Source: Utah Office of Tourism*

Second only to attracting and maintaining a quality workforce, business leaders identified outdoor lifestyle and access to outdoor recreation as the top factors in their company’s decision to locate and expand in Utah.

**HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER EMPLOYEES**

**legislative priorities**

- We support the development and funding of Utah’s recreational assets, including additional facilities to meet growing demands, while improving outdoor access for residents and addressing infrastructure needs.

- We support directing state funds to promote Utah tourism products and assets where there is capacity for growth; this includes state parks, winter sports, cultural assets and other attractions.
energy

UTAH’S DIVERSE ENERGY PORTFOLIO

Energy is a $20.9 billion industry in Utah, generating $673 million in state and local revenues.

There are more than 18,000 direct energy jobs in the state.

Utah has one of the most affordable electricity rates in the U.S.

Utah is the 3rd largest producer of geothermal energy in the U.S.

Utah ranks 10th in the U.S. for natural gas production, 11th for oil and 14th for coal.

Utah ranks No. 1 in the U.S. for ENERGY STAR certified schools, and 10th for LEED certified ENERGY STAR buildings.

Source: Governor’s Office of Energy Development

legislative priorities

We support maintaining Utah’s diverse energy portfolio.

We support advancements in infrastructure and market access for Utah’s abundant energy and mineral resources.

Source: Governor’s Office of Energy Development
HEALTH CARE

Maximize Value
About 61%, or approximately 2 million Utahns, purchase health insurance through employers. This is the highest in the nation and significantly higher than the U.S. average of 49%. For this reason, it is critical that Utah’s employers play a larger role in the future of our state’s health care system and have more flexibility and control in costs.

Utahns spend more out-of-pocket for their health care and prescription drugs than the average American. This is partially due to the fact that Utah has the highest adoption of high-deductible health plans in the nation. Enrollment in high-deductible plans has increased from 3% to 30% over the past decade.

**HEALTH CARE IS A BUSINESS ISSUE**

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**Pricing and Affordability**

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**Where does your health care dollar go?**

- Prescription Drugs: 23.3¢
- Doctor Services: 22.2¢
- Office & Clinic Visits: 20.2¢
- Hospital Stays: 16.1¢
- Taxes: 4.7¢
- Profit: 2.3¢
- Other: 11.2¢

*Customer engagement, finance claims, care management, technology, administration and provider management.

Source: America’s Health Insurance Plans

Source: Utah Insurance Department

Source: Utah Foundation
As health care costs continue to rise, the only viable strategy for employers to manage their costs is to become engaged in the conversation of understanding the price of health care goods, services and medications. With Utah employers covering a majority of health care insurance costs, transparency in pricing, now more than ever, is critical to a businesses success and growth.

Donna Milavetz, CEO, OnSite Care

BRANDED DRUG PRICES HAVE NEARLY TRIPLED SINCE 2008

![Graph showing branded and generic prescription price index from 2008 to 2016.](image)

Source: The Commonwealth Fund

Private sector innovation and drug pricing transparency laws, which require drug companies to disclose price increases in advance, will be critical steps for greater transparency and affordability.

TRANSARENCY CAN:

- Improve Quality of Care
- Improve Productivity
- Help Reduce Operating Costs

Transparency in health care costs and prescription drug pricing empowers Utah families to control how they use their health care dollars, allowing for more financial based decisions that will ultimately save employers money and reduce out-of-pocket spending.

legislative priorities

We support reforms that apply market principles to contain unsustainable costs and improve health. Such reforms require bold action to increase transparency and quality, as well as foster private sector innovation leading to better outcomes.

We support improving price transparency to better inform Utahns on health care costs.

We generally oppose mandates as they artificially raise the cost of health plans, limit employers’ ability to tailor benefits according to workforce needs and demands, and stifle efforts to provide consumers with a variety of choices.
legislative priorities

business climate

We support broadening the sales tax base and lowering the rate to ensure Utah has a modern tax code to match our modern economy.

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We support stimulating rural economic development by building and improving infrastructure in key locations to attract immediate business investment.

education & workforce

We support immediate action to begin an industry-led Construction Career Pathway that meets the immense workforce demands of the construction industry.

We support ongoing funding for the Build to Success program.

We support ongoing investment for a statewide college access advisor program to help increase the number of high school graduates enrolling in college.

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housing affordability

We support programs that provide technical assistance to local communities as they plan for growth, specifically the connection between transportation and land use.

We support ongoing funding for public awareness efforts regarding Utah’s housing gap and the need for positive, smart growth.

We support municipalities taking action to use, and be compliant with, their moderate-income housing plans.

We support incentivizing transit-oriented, mixed-use developments that make smart use of land and allow residents to live in walkable, accessible communities.

We support clarifying Utah’s referendum laws to provide certainty for developers, cities and residents.
We support the evaluation and modification of the current sales tax distribution formula recognizing that tax policy impacts development patterns.

We support initiatives and workforce development efforts that address the state’s ongoing construction and trade labor shortage.

**Transportation**

- We support continued investment in our state’s multimodal transportation network to address capacity expansion, maintenance and operation of Utah’s significant transportation assets.
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**Environment**

- We support increased enforcement on mandatory non-wood burning days.
- We support investment for wood burning change outs specifically targeted to geographic areas that are disproportionately affected by the air pollution.
- We support targeted efforts to assist home and building owners to become more energy efficient.
- We support educating the public on their secondary water use through metering and pricing based on usage.
- We support the development and funding of Utah’s recreational assets, including additional facilities to meet growing demands, while improving outdoor access for residents and addressing infrastructure needs.
- We support directing state funds to promote Utah tourism products and assets where there is capacity for growth; this includes state parks, winter sports, cultural assets and other attractions.
- We support maintaining Utah’s diverse energy portfolio.
- We support advancements in infrastructure and market access for Utah’s abundant energy and mineral resources.

**Health Care**

- We support reforms that apply market principles to contain unsustainable costs and improve health. Such reforms require bold action to increase transparency and quality, as well as foster private sector innovation leading to better outcomes.
- We support improving price transparency to better inform Utahns on health care costs.
- We generally oppose mandates as they artificially raise the cost of health plans, limit employers’ ability to tailor benefits according to workforce needs and demands, and stifle efforts to provide consumers with a variety of choices.
A special thank you to our policy committees for their guidance and help in shaping our legislative priorities.

Questions?
Contact Abby Osborne
Vice President of Policy & Government Relations
801-831-6116 | aosborne@slchamber.com