

Nicholeen P. Peck proposes the following substitute bill:

**Joint Resolution Encouraging Strong Family Units**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Nicholeen P. Peck**

Senate Sponsor:

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This resolution promotes strengthening households of married parents with children.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- highlights the correlation between percentage of households of married parents with children and child poverty;
- promotes career and technical programs to increase upward social mobility and financial stability;
- promotes the Success Sequence to teach students how to create strong family units; and
- encourages policies creating family stability and a strong foundation for Utah children.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

WHEREAS, the bonds between parents and children are fundamental to human development;

WHEREAS, humans have a psychological and social need for feelings of belonging, love, and strong familial relationships;

WHEREAS, for most individuals, family provides essential support during challenging times;

WHEREAS, the global Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action determined that "family is the basic group unit of society," underscoring the family's pivotal role in societal well-being;

WHEREAS, according to the National Census, in 1980, 77% of children lived with married parents;

WHEREAS, in 2020, nationally, 63% of children lived with married parents;

WHEREAS, there is a correlation between the decline in percentage of children living with married parents and the increase in income inequality, the increase in poverty rates, and the decrease in economic mobility;

WHEREAS, Archbridge Institute ranks Utah as the best in the nation for social mobility;

WHEREAS, investing in career and technical programs provide Utahns greater access to higher-paying jobs, leading to upward mobility and increased family stability;

WHEREAS, according to a 2024 United States Department of Health and Human Services report, 80% of Utah households are headed by two parents, compared to 63% nationally;

WHEREAS, according to economist Melissa Kearny, the higher percentage of two-parent households is correlated with low poverty rates, high social mobility, and lower income inequality;

WHEREAS, findings from the Marriage and Religion Research Institute indicate that children raised by married parents experience better long-term outcomes, such as higher educational attainment, improved emotional well-being, and greater economic stability compared to those raised in single-parent households;

WHEREAS, Utah is committed to creating strong families;

WHEREAS, Utah promotes the Success Sequence where children are encouraged to complete at least a high school education, obtain full-time work, and marry before having children;

WHEREAS, the Success Sequence teaches students the importance of education, financial responsibility, and intact, healthy marriages;

WHEREAS, Utah's early-childhood tax credit provides financial relief to families during the early, formative years of a child's life;

WHEREAS, Utah is not immune to the national trend of decreasing birthrates and decline of households of married parents with children;

WHEREAS, these trends are a cause for concern for the future of Utah children;

WHEREAS, Utah code has replaced or removed references to mother, father, person, parent, and family;

WHEREAS, many single-parent families find themselves in a less-than-ideal situation when raising children;

WHEREAS, single-parent families work diligently and often raise remarkable children

63 despite the hardships they face; and

64 WHEREAS, single-parent families should never be stigmatized:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah commits  
66 to provide children with the greatest opportunities for success in life by prioritizing intact  
67 families in legislation language, including maintaining the terms mother, father, person, and  
68 parents in Utah code and adding those terms into legislation when possible in order to maintain  
69 a state focus on families and to direct attention towards creating strong families for Utah's  
70 children.

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah encourages and  
72 promotes two-parent families, strong marriages, and healthy family communication.

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah promotes career  
74 and technical programs, the Success Sequence, and continuing and expanding the  
75 early-childhood tax credits to create financial security, upward mobility, and family stability  
76 that creates a strong foundation for Utah children.