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Political Signs Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jordan D. Teuscher

Sponsor:

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LONG TITLE

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General Description:

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This bill amends provisions related to political signs.

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Highlighted Provisions:

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This bill:

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- defines terms;

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- reduces the size dimensions of a political sign that is exempt from disclosing, on the sign, the person who paid for the sign;

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- prohibits a person from:

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- attaching a political sign to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal; or

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- affixing an object to a political sign for the purpose of blocking, concealing, or misrepresenting the message or image on the political sign;

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- expands existing criminal penalties for defacing political signs to cover the conduct described above, and specifies exceptions for:

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- a person who removes a political sign that does not contain the disclosure described above;

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- a government employee who removes a political sign in the course of the government employee's duties;

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- a person who removes an object that blocks or conceals a political sign; or

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- a person who removes a political sign that is attached to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal;

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- requires each county and municipality to designate one or more locations where a person who removes a political sign may deposit the political sign for safekeeping or disposal;

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- requires a person who removes a political sign under specified circumstances to deposit the sign at a designated location described above;

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- for a county or municipality that receives a political sign, requires the county or municipality to:

- 31 • contact the owner of the political sign; and
- 32 • notify the owner to take possession of the political sign;
- 33 ▸ authorizes a county or municipality to, in certain circumstances:
- 34 • dispose of a political sign; and
- 35 • seek reimbursement from the owner of the political sign for the sign's safekeeping or
- 36 disposal;
- 37 ▸ prohibits a county or municipality from prohibiting a property owner or lawful occupant
- 38 of property adjacent to the park strip from posting a political sign on the park strip; and
- 39 ▸ makes technical and conforming changes.

40 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

41 None

42 **Other Special Clauses:**

43 None

44 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

45 AMENDS:

46 **20A-11-901**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 18

47 **20A-17-102**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 238

48 **20A-17-103**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 15

49 ENACTS:

50 **20A-17-101.5**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

51 **20A-17-104**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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53 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

54 Section 1. Section **20A-11-901** is amended to read:

55 **20A-11-901 . Political advertisements -- Requirement that ads designate**
56 **responsibility and authorization -- Report to lieutenant governor -- Unauthorized use of**
57 **endorsements.**

58 (1)(a) Whenever any person makes an expenditure for the purpose of financing an
59 advertisement expressly advocating for the election or defeat of a clearly identified
60 candidate, or solicits any contribution through any broadcasting station, newspaper,
61 magazine, outdoor advertising facility, direct mailing, or any other type of general
62 public political advertising, the advertisement:

- 63 (i) if paid for and authorized by a candidate or the candidate's campaign committee,
- 64 shall clearly state that the advertisement has been paid for by the candidate or the

- 65 campaign committee;
- 66 (ii) if paid for by another person but authorized by a candidate or the candidate's
67 campaign committee, shall clearly state who paid for the advertisement and that
68 the candidate or the campaign committee authorized the advertisement; or
- 69 (iii) if not authorized by a candidate or a candidate's campaign committee, shall
70 clearly state the name of the person who paid for the advertisement and state that
71 the advertisement is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.
- 72 (2)(a) A person that makes an expenditure for the purpose of financing an advertisement
73 related to a ballot proposition shall ensure that the advertisement complies with
74 Subsection (2)(b) if the advertisement expressly advocates:
- 75 (i) for placing a ballot proposition on the ballot;
76 (ii) for keeping a ballot proposition off the ballot;
77 (iii) that a voter refrain from voting on a ballot proposition; or
78 (iv) that a voter vote for or against a ballot proposition.
- 79 (b) An advertisement described in Subsection (2)(a) shall:
- 80 (i) if paid for by a political issues committee, clearly state that the advertisement was
81 paid for by the political issues committee;
- 82 (ii) if paid for by another person but authorized by a political issues committee,
83 clearly state who paid for the advertisement and that the political issues committee
84 authorized the advertisement; or
- 85 (iii) if not authorized by a political issues committee, clearly state the name of the
86 person who paid for the advertisement and state that the advertisement is not
87 authorized by any political issues committee.
- 88 (3) The requirements of Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to:
- 89 (a) ~~[lawn signs with dimensions of four by eight feet or smaller]~~ a political sign, as that
90 term is defined in Section 20A-17-101.5, with dimensions that are less than 24 by 18
91 inches;
- 92 (b) bumper stickers;
- 93 (c) campaign pins, buttons, and pens; or
- 94 (d) similar small items upon which the disclaimer cannot be conveniently printed.
- 95 (4)(a) A person who is not a reporting entity and pays for an electioneering
96 communication shall file a report with the lieutenant governor within 24 hours of
97 making the payment or entering into a contract to make the payment.
- 98 (b) The report shall include:

- 99 (i) the name and address of the person described in Subsection (4)(a);
- 100 (ii) the name and address of each person contributing at least \$100 to the person
- 101 described in Subsection (4)(a) for the purpose of disseminating the electioneering
- 102 communication;
- 103 (iii) the amount spent on the electioneering communication;
- 104 (iv) the name of the identified referenced candidate; and
- 105 (v) the medium used to disseminate the electioneering communication.
- 106 (5) A person may not, in order to promote the success of any candidate for nomination or
- 107 election to any public office, or in connection with any question submitted to the voters,
- 108 include or cause to be included the name of any person as endorser or supporter in any
- 109 political advertisement, circular, poster, or publication without the express consent of
- 110 that person.
- 111 (6)(a) It is unlawful for a person to pay the owner, editor, publisher, or agent of any
- 112 newspaper or other periodical to induce the owner, editor, publisher, or agent to
- 113 advocate or oppose editorially any candidate for nomination or election.
- 114 (b) It is unlawful for any owner, editor, publisher, or agent to accept any payment to
- 115 advocate or oppose editorially any candidate for nomination or election.

116 Section 2. Section **20A-17-101.5** is enacted to read:

117 **20A-17-101.5 . Definitions.**

118 As used in this chapter:

119 (1) "Contact information" means:

- 120 (a) as it relates to a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
- 121 committee:
- 122 (i) the address and telephone number for the candidate that the candidate designates
- 123 on a declaration of candidacy as the address and telephone number where the
- 124 candidate may be contacted to receive official election notices; or
- 125 (ii) if the address or telephone number described in Subsection (1)(a) is a protected
- 126 record under Section 63G-2-305, the alternative address or telephone number that
- 127 the candidate filing the declaration of candidacy provides to the election officer.
- 128 (b) as it relates to a filing entity other than a filing entity who is a candidate for public
- 129 office, the name, address, and telephone number of an officer for the filing entity that
- 130 the filing entity provides to the lieutenant governor in a statement of organization or
- 131 financial statement filed under Chapter 11, Campaign and Financial Reporting
- 132 Requirements.

- 133 (2) "Filing entity" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-11-101.
- 134 (3) "Local government entity" means:
- 135 (a) a county, municipality, or other political subdivision;
- 136 (b) a special district, as defined in Section 17B-1-102;
- 137 (c) a special service district, as defined in Section 17D-1-102;
- 138 (d) a local building authority, as defined in Section 17D-2-102;
- 139 (e) a conservation district, as defined in Section 17D-3-102;
- 140 (f) an independent entity, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;
- 141 (g) a public corporation, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;
- 142 (h) a public transit district, organized under Title 17B, Chapter 2a, Part 8, Public Transit
- 143 District Act;
- 144 (i) a school district;
- 145 (j) a public school, including a charter school or other publicly funded school;
- 146 (k) a state institution of higher education;
- 147 (l) an entity that expends public funds; and
- 148 (m) each office, agency, or other division of an entity described in Subsections (1)(a)
- 149 through (l).
- 150 (4) "Political sign" means any sign or document that advocates:
- 151 (a) the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or
- 152 (b) the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.
- 153 (5)(a) "Public property" means any real property, building, or structure owned or leased
- 154 by a local government entity.
- 155 (b) "Public property" does not include any real property, building, or structure during a
- 156 period of time that the real property, building, or structure is rented out by a
- 157 government entity to a private party for a meeting, convention, or similar event.
- 158 (6) "Railroad sign or signal" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-6a-102.
- 159 (7)(a) "Roadway" means:
- 160 (i) a state highway, as described in Section 72-3-102;
- 161 (ii) a county road, as described in Section 72-3-103;
- 162 (iii) a city street, as described in Section 72-3-104;
- 163 (iv) a class D road, as described in Section 72-3-105; or
- 164 (v) a rail-based fixed guideway operated by a large public transit district.
- 165 (b) Roadway" includes:
- 166 (i) the right-of-way for a roadway; and

- 167 (ii) infrastructure appurtenant to a roadway that is owned, maintained, or controlled
 168 by:
 169 (A) a county or municipality;
 170 (B) a large public transit district organized under Title 17B, Chapter 2a, Part 8,
 171 Public Transit District Act; or
 172 (C) the Department of Transportation created in Title 72, Chapter 1, Part 2,
 173 Department of Transportation.

174 (8) "Sign owner" means a person who is required to make the disclosure described in
 175 Subsection 20A-11-901(1) or (2) on a political sign because the person paid for the
 176 political sign.

177 Section 3. Section **20A-17-102** is amended to read:

178 **20A-17-102 . Political signs -- Defacement -- Removal.**

179 [~~(1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if the~~
 180 ~~person knowingly removes, alters, defaces, or otherwise vandalizes a sign:]~~

181 [~~(a) advocating the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or]~~

182 [~~(b) advocating the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.]~~

183 (1) Except as provided in Subsection (3) or (5), a person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor
 184 if the person knowingly:

185 (a) removes, alters, defaces, or otherwise vandalizes a political sign; or

186 (b) attaches or affixes any object to a political sign, including another political sign, and
 187 the object:

188 (i) hides, blocks, obscures, or otherwise substantially conceals from view the
 189 message or image on the political sign; or

190 (ii) changes or misrepresents the intent of the message on the political sign.

191 (2) A person is guilty of an infraction if the person knowingly attaches or affixes a political
 192 sign to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any
 193 railroad sign or signal.

194 [~~(2)] (3) A person is not guilty of a violation of Subsection [~~(1)~~] (1)(a) if the person who~~
 195 ~~engages in the conduct described in Subsection [~~(1)~~] (1)(a) is:~~

196 (a) ~~as it relates to a sign described in Subsection (1)(a), the candidate or an agent of the~~
 197 ~~candidate;]~~

198 (b) (a) [~~as it relates to a sign described in Subsection (1)(b),~~]the person who placed the
 199 political sign, the person who directed the placement of the political sign, or an agent
 200 of either;

- 201 ~~[(e)]~~ (b) a property owner of property or of a right-of-way adjacent to property on which
 202 the political sign is placed, or the property owner's agent; [or]
- 203 (c) a person who removes the political sign because:
- 204 (i) the size dimensions of the political sign are equal to or greater than the size
 205 dimensions described in Subsection 20A-11-901(3)(a); and
- 206 (ii) the political sign does not contain the disclosure described in Subsection
 207 20A-11-901(1) or (2); or
- 208 (d) a public official ~~[who removes the sign in accordance with an official duty of the~~
 209 ~~public official]~~ or government employee who removes the political sign in accordance
 210 with the duties of the public official or government employee.
- 211 (4) A sign owner that posts or displays a political sign on a roadway shall ensure that the
 212 political sign is removed from the roadway no later than 14 calendar days after the day
 213 of the election to which the political sign relates.
- 214 (5) Notwithstanding Subsection (1)(a), any person may:
- 215 (a) in response to another person engaging in the conduct described in Subsection (1)(b),
 216 remove an object that is attached or affixed to the political sign;
- 217 (b) in response to another person engaging in the conduct described in Subsection (2),
 218 remove a political sign that is attached or affixed to a utility pole, light pole, an
 219 electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal.; or
- 220 (c) remove a political sign that is posted or displayed on a roadway for longer than the
 221 time period described in Subsection (4).
- 222 (6) A person who removes a political sign under Subsection (3)(c) or (d) shall deposit the
 223 political sign at a location described in Subsection 20A-17-104(1).
- 224 (7) Nothing in this section limits the prosecution or sentencing of a person who, while
 225 removing a political sign under Subsection (3)(c), commits an offense under Title 76,
 226 Utah Criminal Code.

227 Section 4. Section **20A-17-103** is amended to read:

228 **20A-17-103 . Posting political signs -- Public property -- Park strips.**

229 ~~[(1) As used in this section:]~~

230 ~~[(a) "Local government entity" means:]~~

231 ~~[(i) a county, municipality, or other political subdivision;]~~

232 ~~[(ii) a special district, as defined in Section 17B-1-102;]~~

233 ~~[(iii) a special service district, as defined in Section 17D-1-102;]~~

234 ~~[(iv) a local building authority, as defined in Section 17D-2-102;]~~

- 235 ~~[(v) a conservation district, as defined in Section 17D-3-102;]~~
 236 ~~[(vi) an independent entity, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;]~~
 237 ~~[(vii) a public corporation, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;]~~
 238 ~~[(viii) a public transit district, organized under Title 17B, Chapter 2a, Part 8, Public~~
 239 ~~Transit District Act;]~~
 240 ~~[(ix) a school district;]~~
 241 ~~[(x) a public school, including a charter school or other publicly funded school;]~~
 242 ~~[(xi) a state institution of higher education;]~~
 243 ~~[(xii) an entity that expends public funds; and]~~
 244 ~~[(xiii) each office, agency, or other division of an entity described in Subsections~~
 245 ~~(1)(a)(i) through (xii).]~~
 246 ~~[(b) "Political sign" means any sign or document that advocates:]~~
 247 ~~[(i) the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or]~~
 248 ~~[(ii) the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.]~~
 249 ~~[(e)(i) "Public property" means any real property, building, or structure owned or~~
 250 ~~leased by a local government entity.]~~
 251 ~~[(ii) "Public property" does not include any real property, building, or structure~~
 252 ~~during a period of time that the real property, building, or structure is rented out~~
 253 ~~by a government entity to a private party for a meeting, convention, or similar~~
 254 ~~event.]~~
 255 ~~[(2)]~~ (1) A local government entity, a local government officer, a local government
 256 employee, or another person with authority or control over public property that posts or
 257 permits a person to post a political sign on public property:
 258 (a) shall permit any other person to post a political sign on the public property, subject to
 259 the same requirements and restrictions imposed on all other political signs permitted
 260 to be posted on the public property; and
 261 (b) may not impose a requirement or restriction on the posting of a political sign if the
 262 requirement or restriction is not politically neutral and content neutral.
 263 (2) A local government entity may not prohibit a person from posting a political sign on a
 264 park strip if the person:
 265 (a)(i) is the property owner or lawful occupant of the property adjacent to the park
 266 strip; and
 267 (ii) is required by a local ordinance or an agreement to maintain the park strip; or
 268 (b) the person obtains consent to post the political sign from the person described in

269 Subsection (2)(a).

270 Section 5. Section **20A-17-104** is enacted to read:

271 **20A-17-104 . Safeguarding and disposing of political signs -- County and**
272 **municipal locations -- Reimbursement from sign owner.**

273 (1) Beginning no later than August 1, 2026, each county and each municipality shall
274 designate one or more locations within the county or municipality where an individual
275 who removes a political sign under Subsection 20A-17-102(3)(c) or (d) may deposit the
276 political sign for safekeeping or disposal in accordance with this section.

277 (2) Subject to Subsection (3), and except as provided in Subsection (4), a county or
278 municipality that receives a political sign at a location described in Subsection (1) shall:

279 (a) safeguard the political sign;

280 (b) use reasonable efforts to obtain contact information for the sign owner:

281 (i) from the election officer for the election to which the political sign relates, if the
282 sign owner is a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
283 committee;

284 (ii) from the lieutenant governor, if the sign owner is a filing entity other than a filing
285 entity who is a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
286 committee; or

287 (iii) using any other lawful means available to the county or municipality;

288 (c) make a reasonable attempt to contact the sign owner by telephone; and

289 (d) notify the sign owner, either during a direct conversation or in a voicemail, that the
290 sign owner has five business days after the date of the notice to take possession of the
291 political sign.

292 (3) If a sign owner receives the notice described in Subsection (2)(d) but does not take
293 possession of the political sign by the deadline described in Subsection (2)(d), or, if a
294 county or municipality is unable to contact a sign owner under Subsection (2)(c), the
295 county or municipality may:

296 (a) dispose of the political sign; and

297 (b) seek reimbursement from the sign owner for the cost of safekeeping or disposing of
298 the political sign, at a rate not to exceed \$20 per sign, in accordance with Subsection
299 (5).

300 (4) A county or municipality that receives a political sign at a location described in
301 Subsection (1) may dispose of the political sign if the county or municipality:

302 (a) cannot identify the sign owner; or

- 303 (b) cannot obtain contact information for the sign owner under Subsection (2)(b).
304 (5)(a) A county or municipality that seeks reimbursement under Subsection (3)(b) shall
305 mail a reimbursement notice to the sign owner using the contact information that the
306 county or municipality obtains under Subsection (2)(a).
- 307 (b) A reimbursement notice shall include:
- 308 (i) the number of political signs safeguarded or disposed of by the county or
309 municipality;
 - 310 (ii) the reimbursement amount; and
 - 311 (iii) any other information deemed relevant by the county or municipality to obtain
312 reimbursement for safeguarding or disposing of the political sign.
- 313 (6)(a) Subject to Subsection (6)(b), a sign owner that receives a reimbursement notice
314 under Subsection (5) shall pay the amount specified in the notice no later than 30
315 calendar days after the day on which the reimbursement notice is received in the mail.
- 316 (b) A county or municipality shall provide the sign owner a reasonable opportunity to
317 establish, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the payment of reimbursement is
318 not required.
- 319 (7) A sign owner that receives a reimbursement notice under this section may use campaign
320 funds to pay the reimbursement amount specified in the notice.
- 321 **Section 6. Effective Date.**
322 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.