

# News Release

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## For Immediate Release

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### **Students Get Hands-on Experience – What It's Like to Serve As a Legislator**

**SALT LAKE CITY**, September 11, 2003 - Thousands of Utah students will have the opportunity to learn more about how representative democracy works when state legislators, in a bi-partisan effort, visit classrooms September 22-26 during America's Legislators Back to School Week. Utah's event is being led by Representative LaVar Christensen and Senator David Gladwell on behalf of the Legislature.

“Skilled, caring, and effective teachers are the heart and soul of Utah’s public education system. I love visiting the many schools in my district. This is an exciting opportunity for us, as legislators, to witness first hand the skill and dedication of our public school teachers and the bright and promising future of children in Utah.” – Representative LaVar Christensen

“Legislators in Utah are committed to bringing the brilliant ideals first envisioned by our founding fathers to the classroom. This program presents an invigorating opportunity for us to build personal links with schools and students and to share enthusiasm for the core principles and processes of our unique and extraordinary form of government.” – Senator Dave Gladwell

Last year, 92% of the Utah State Legislature participated ranking #1 in the nation and reaching approximately 9,000 students. SCR 3, Resolution Designating Legislators Back to School Week, that passed in the 2003 General Session, supports the program in Utah.

In its fourth year, this program is designed to teach young people—the nation’s future voters and leaders—what it’s like to serve as an elected official: the processes, the pressures, and the debate, negotiation and compromise that are the very fabric of representative democracy. Organizers of the event hope that the students will value the importance of public service and become more active in civic affairs after legislators and students engage in activities regarding issues that are important to the students.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), a bipartisan nonprofit organization, is composed of the nation's state legislators and staff. America's Legislators Back to School Week is a product of NCSL's civic education initiative, Trust for Representative Democracy, and is funded by the US Department of Education. Based on the ideas and fundamental principles set forth by the framers of the Constitution, the Trust is designed to engage young people and build their understanding and support for America's democratic institutions.

Information about America's Legislators Back to School Week is available online at <http://www.le.state.ut.us/lrgc/backtoschool.htm> or by contacting Shelley Day, State Coordinator, at the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, 801-538-1032 or [shelleyday@utah.gov](mailto:shelleyday@utah.gov).

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