SENATE JOURNAL

THIRD DAY

January 29, 2020

The Senate was called to order at 11:11 a.m., with President J. Stuart Adams presiding.

Prayer – Father Dominic Briese, Chaplin Juan Diego Catholic High School
Pledge of Allegiance – Senator Scott Sandall
Roll Call – All Senators present except Senator Buxton, excused.

READING OF TITLES OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS
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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On motion of Senator Cullimore, Dr. Galey Colosimo, Juan Diego Catholic High School, spoke in Committee of the Whole.

On motion of Senator Cullimore, the Committee of the Whole was dissolved.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE

Mr. President: January 28, 2019

The House passed H.B. 21, INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM EXTENSION, by Representative D. Owens, and it is transmitted for consideration; and

The House passed H.B. 46, ARTS AND MUSEUMS REVISIONS, by Representative S. Harrison, and it is transmitted for consideration.

Megan S. Allen, Chief Clerk

Communications filed. The bills were read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

S.B. 7, National Guard, Veterans’ Affairs, and Legislature Base Budget (J. Stevenson), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.
S.B. 79, Regional Education Service Agencies (L. Hillyard), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 80, Campus Safety Amendments (J. Iwamoto), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 81, Motion Picture Incentives Amendments (D. Thatcher), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 82, Unlawful Drug Disposal Amendments (D. Thatcher), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 83, Voter Registration Information Amendments (J. Anderegg), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 84, Public Entity Water Users Amendments (J. Anderegg), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 85, License Plate Position Amendments (S. Sandall), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

S.B. 86, Military Retirement Income Tax Credit (C. Bramble), was read the first time by short title and referred to the Rules Committee.

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On motion of Senator Vickers, and at 11:30 a.m., the Senate adjourned until 11:00 a.m., Thursday, January 31, 2019.

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President J. Stuart Adams called the Joint Convention to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Chamber of the Utah House of Representatives and recognized Brad R. Wilson, Speaker of the House.

President Adams announced that a quorum of the House of Representatives and the Senate was present.

President Adams appointed a Joint Committee comprised of Senators Evan Vickers, Dan Hemmert, and Karen Mayne, and Representatives Francis Gibson, Mike Schultz, and Brian King to notify Governor Gary R. Herbert that the 2020 General Session of the Sixty-Third Legislature is in Joint Convention and ready to hear his State-of-the-State address.
President Adams acknowledged special guests and elected and appointed officials in attendance at the Joint Convention.

Senator Evan Vickers made a motion that the Legislature resolve into a Joint Convention and Committee of the Whole for the purpose of hearing Governor Herbert’s State–of–the–State address.

The Joint Committee escorted Governor Herbert to the House rostrum.

STATE–OF–THE–STATE ADDRESS
BY GOVERNOR GARY R. HERBERT

President Adams, Speaker Wilson (Happy Birthday), members of the Legislature, justices of the Supreme Court, the First Lady of my life, Utah’s First Lady, Jeanette, (thank you for your love and support), Lieutenant Governor Spencer and Mrs. Cox (thank you for your partnership and leadership), the other constitutional officers, and my fellow Utahns:

I am indeed grateful to be here to address you this evening.

I’d like to welcome our legislators back to the hill and also extend a special welcome to Representatives Candice Pierucci and Steve Christiansen, who are joining us for their first general legislative session.

My advice to them, and to all of you, is to roll up your sleeves and get to work, because we have a lot to do in the next 42 days.

For those who are keeping score, this is my 11th and my final State of the State address.

And I give this speech tonight full of renewed hope and optimism for Utah’s future.

I have learned much in my ten and a half years as governor.

And as I reflect on our state’s successes, I feel humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside all of you, and to see firsthand the impact Utahns are having on improving our state.

Tonight, I’d like to express the deep respect and admiration I have for the people of Utah. I would like to speak directly to them for just a moment:
You are kind-hearted people.

You do good wherever you live.

It is your hard work that helps bolster our economy.

It is your kindness and service that make us the most charitable state in the nation.

You care about your neighbors. You volunteer.

It is your hopeful spirit and work ethic that make Utah the best place in the nation to live, to work, and to raise a family.

You are the main reason for our success.

Thank you for all that you do to make Utah great.

As directed by the Utah Constitution, I’m here tonight to report to you on the State of our State and to “recommend such measures as may be deemed expedient.”

To say that the State of our State is excellent would be a gross understatement.

Utah is thriving and we are in the best position economically that we have ever been in our state’s history.

We are leading the nation in job growth!

Our unemployment rate is at an all-time low of 2.3 percent!

And what that means is that our state’s economy has created over 312,600 new jobs since the Great Recession.

We have the largest middle class in America.

Here in Utah, people are living the American dream of upward mobility the best in the nation.

Personal income is growing by approximately 7 percent per year, which is the second highest rate in the nation.

And if that’s not enough, our household income is now the seventh highest in the nation.
And if that’s STILL not enough, Utahns now have the lowest state tax obligation in 27 years.

In addition, our education system has improved dramatically, with high school graduation rates improving by 11.4 percentage points since I became governor.

Our student achievement is no longer at the middle of the pack on tests that compare states one to another. Today, our students score in the top ten in almost every subject.

Our goal to have the best education system in America is clearly within reach!

We’ve also seen tremendous successes in higher education, including in our technical and vocational training colleges.

We’ve seen improvements in transportation and infrastructure, in healthcare, and in many other areas.

I could go on and on, but ... you get the picture. The State of our State is well, it’s just the best.

Utah is leading the way today. And by the way, Utah has led the way in the past.

This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment women’s suffrage, the right to vote! It’s also been 150 years since Seraph Young became the first woman in the nation to vote, right here in Utah!

This year we are even sending Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon to Washington to remind everyone that Utah women voted first!

In honor of this event, I would like to ask all of our female elected officials, who are carrying on the legacy of Dr. Cannon, to stand and be recognized. You are proving that a Utah woman’s place is in the House AND in the Senate!

This evening, let us look forward to the challenges of the future with hope, optimism and with focus.

Let us determine WHAT we need to accomplish NOW for the future generations and for the decades to come.

We’ve gathered here at the start of not just a new legislative session, but at the literal dawn of a new decade.
Our quality of life has never been better. And our FUTURE has never been brighter!

Utah has always represented a better tomorrow.

Our pioneer ancestors journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley in search of a better life and new opportunities.

On their journey, they planted crops that they would never harvest, and improved trails on which they would never again set foot.

They did this because they knew that there would be others who would follow...

TODAY, new, modern-day pioneers are still coming here in search of a better life and new opportunities.

One such person is Mohammad Alsoudani, a 23-year-old refugee from Iraq, who came to America six years ago.

In high school, he worked a part-time job to help support his family while working hard to graduate and to learn English.

After graduation, he signed up for computer programming courses taught at our Refugee Education and Training Center.

His hard work paid off. He is now employed by NAV, a tech company in Salt Lake. He is making a six-figure salary.

He reminds us all of what my Dad used to say, WORK WILL WIN WHEN WISHY WASHY WISHING WON’T!

Mohammad is here with us tonight, along with other representatives of our refugee community some of today’s modern pioneers.

Mohammad’s success is impressive, but what I find truly remarkable about his story is that he now volunteers at the same Refugee Education and Training Center where he once studied.

He is helping others on their journey.

He is improving the trail for those who are coming after him.

He and his colleagues embody the same pioneering spirit that has defined us since 1847. Refugees then and now, are an important thread that has been woven
into the tapestry of our state and our lives. Please join with me in recognizing their contributions.

Significant challenges, though, do lie ahead for us.

For example, projections show our population will reach 5.8 million by the year 2065.

Growth IS coming to the state of Utah. And we must plan for that growth, and proactively prepare the way for those who are coming.

Our success in Utah has not been by luck, accident, or serendipity.

It has been by DESIGN, and it comes as the result of proper planning, and developing good policies that empower the private sector.

In my last ten and a half years as governor, I have learned that every success creates not only new challenges but also new opportunities!

The 2010s have been the most successful decade in Utah’s history.

Let us work together to make sure that the 2020s are an EVEN BETTER decade.

So, let’s now focus on the challenges and opportunities that growth is bringing.

More people will mean we need more housing. So, how do we ensure housing affordability?

More people will drive more cars and create more traffic. So, what changes will need to be made to avoid a California–like gridlock in traffic, and time–consuming commutes?

More cars will create the potential for added pollution. So, how do we protect the air that we breathe?

Your actions as a Legislature over these next 42 days will be instrumental in answering these, and many other important questions.

Above me are the Latin words “Vox Populi” – which literally means the “voice of the people.”

The voice of the people is an essential part of representative government, and it is the reason that the tax bill passed during December’s special session will NOT be implemented.
But tax policy is complex. And tax modernization is still needed in order to have sustainable funding for public education, Medicaid, and other critical, core government services.

I appreciate your efforts on this very difficult issue.

But we need to continue this discussion with the people of Utah. We need to improve the dialogue. We need to build consensus, and we need to take the time to find solutions that are fair and equitable, AND that will serve the best interests and the long-term needs of the people. I know we can do that.

Most of you will remember that in the depths of the great recession, I set the goal for Utah to not only come out of the recession, but to become the top performing economy in the nation.

By continuing to rely on sound economic principles, we can ensure that this success will continue for decades to come.

And TODAY, as a result of our efforts, we NOW have the healthiest and most diverse economy in the United States!

One of the challenges that still remains economically is to ensure job opportunities to the nearly 25 percent of our people that live in rural Utah.

As I travel from county to county, I recognize that Utahns love the beauty, peace and serenity of the road less traveled, such as Highway 10 through Ferron, or Highway 130 through Minersville, or through Rep. Casey Snider’s hometown of Paradise.

Many Utahns don’t want to just vacation in rural Utah, they want to live there, and to work there, and to raise their families there.

But raising a family in rural Utah requires stable employment.

And many rural families are searching for better job opportunities closer to home.

The good news is that according to our Department of Workforce Services, we are on track to exceed our goal of creating 25,000 new jobs in rural Utah by the end of this year.

For example, the Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative is finding new ways to turn coal into carbon fiber.
The Utah Rural Online Initiative is empowering rural residents with new career options.

Our successful efforts to develop broadband throughout the state are setting the foundation for opportunities we can’t yet even imagine.

And thanks to technology and our telecommuting initiative, we’ve moved many state jobs to communities off of the Wasatch Front.

From Panguitch to Providence, and from Richfield to Richmond, we are making significant progress.

But we all agree that WE WILL NOT REST until all 249 cities and towns, in all of our 29 counties, are thriving economically.

But ensuring a high quality of life isn’t just about the jobs it’s also about the environment that we live in.

I’m pleased to note that in the past decade, air pollution in our state has decreased by over 30 percent!

We’ve also worked hard to bring Tier 3 fuels to the state.

Newer cars using this fuel can see an 80 percent reduction in emissions, which is like taking four out of every five cars off of the road.

However, as our population grows, so does the potential for increased pollution and crowding.

We need to ensure that our children have safe places to play, clean air to breathe and good water to drink.

Salt Lake City’s new mayor, Erin Mendenhall, in indicating a desire for more collaboration with the State, has said that Utah “has an incredible opportunity to ensure continued growth, financial stability, and environmental viability by helping shift commuters onto public transit.”

We do need to boldly reimagine our roads to safely accommodate cars, mass transit, bikes, pedestrians, and even those scooters.

We should make commuting by transit as easy as commuting by car.

Therefore, as President Adams has recommended, we do need to double–track sections of Frontrunner. WHY? So we can run trains every 15 minutes, instead of every half an hour.
In my budget, I set aside a $34 million down payment toward improvements in heavy rail, light rail, and bus transit.

Also in my budget recommendations, I set aside $66 million for fast electric vehicle charging stations, to help accommodate the growing use of electric automobiles on Utah’s roads.

This $100 million investment in our transportation and mass transit is a necessary step toward improving the air that we breathe.

Thanks to you all for taking this issue seriously especially members of our Clean Air Caucus, including legislators like Luz Escamilla and Patrice Arent, Steve Handy and Todd Weiler and many others including UCAIR, the Utah Clean Air Partnership for your work on improving air quality.

In addition to putting pressure on our transportation system, Utah’s continued growth has created a very tight housing market, which is driving up the costs to purchase or to rent.

It’s time to consider making our land use zoning laws, and building codes more responsive to our growing population and market needs when it comes to housing affordability.

This means we need to reimagine what our communities and houses will look like in the future.

By thinking creatively, and working in collaboration with our cities and counties, we can help change the landscape of our housing market, and help design neighborhoods that our children and grandchildren will want to live in, and just as importantly that they can afford to live in.

This will be difficult, but it is needful, and it will be worth the effort.

In the last three years, the State has worked with Salt Lake City to change how we help those experiencing homelessness.

I express my appreciation to Lieutenant Governor Cox for his compassion on this issue, and for his leadership in bringing people together to find solutions.

This past year saw the opening of three new resource centers, which provide shelter, food, medical care, employment assistance, community support, and help in finding long–term housing.

These centers are changing lives.
It is our responsibility, and the role of government, to make sure that our state provides unparalleled opportunity and quality of life for the people that we represent.

I’m grateful to all those who work to focus their efforts on helping the most vulnerable citizens among us.

I share the vision of my friend, Pamela Atkinson, the Mother Theresa of Utah, who said:

“We want to help individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness to be able to attain safe housing, and enjoy positive life activity by finding a good job with a livable income, so that all may have a productive and meaningful life!”

Pamela, we all share that goal with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, all of the planning we do for the future success of our state all of the energy and time we invest in supporting its economy will do very little if we do not put our children and their education first in every decision that we make.

If we want to plan for the future, if we want to plan for growth, we would be wise to invest directly in the people who will lead Utah in the future our children.

Throughout my time as governor, education has been my number one priority.

I’ve often said that education is not all about the money, but it is some about the money.

I appreciate that with the adoption of this year’s budget, you will have invested an additional 2.6 billion dollars in our school children in K–12 over the last nine years.

On behalf of students, their parents, their grandparents, teachers, the business community and nearly everyone in the state we say thank you to the Legislature, for your commitment to education!

These have been necessary and important steps in the right direction, and I urge you to stay the course!

I realize that providing the best education possible to our students is not only about the dollars spent, but also about the people who are teaching our children.
I have such respect for our teachers, and for their dedication to our students. They deserve our trust and our support. They get the big picture.

This year’s teacher of the year, Lauren Merkley, is here with us tonight, and she is one such teacher who gets it.

Her vision is that Utah will lead not just in test scores, but in an education system that meets the individual needs of every student a system unafraid of innovation, dedicated to equitable practices, and filled with teachers expertly versed in both content and compassion.

Please join with me as we recognize her, our teacher of the year and express appreciation for all of the teachers in Utah!

And by the way, compassion is so important in our schools not just with our very young students, but also with students in middle school, and high school.

I’d like to once again thank the Legislature, and especially Rep. Eliason and Sen. Thatcher, for crafting meaningful policy and helping to direct investments in school counseling, anti-bullying campaigns, and the development of the SafeUT app, which lets our students anonymously connect with mental health professionals.

These resources are improving, and even saving, the lives of our young people.

This session we can continue to strengthen and enhance our mental health resources, because... EVERY PERSON MATTERS.

My friends, we have everything it takes to achieve our goal to become the best education system in America, and we can achieve that goal by working together, by expressing gratitude to and supporting the good work of our teachers, and also by continuing to appropriately fund public and higher education.

We also need to acknowledge the efforts of our parents, principals, superintendents, school board members, and our private sector partners.

Let’s continue to commit, right here and right now, that as a state, when it comes to supporting education, we will settle for nothing less than an “A” grade.

Exactly 10 years ago, I stood here and delivered my first State of the State address.

Next year, someone else will stand here in my place.
(And from the number of candidates running for governor, it looks like there are a LOT of people who really, really want to deliver that speech.)

It has been an amazing decade. We’ve had a great run together.

We’ve seen major challenges, but we’ve also created solutions and seen unparalleled success.

The challenges we face today are not the same challenges that we faced ten years ago.

Ten years ago on this same occasion, I said that we could find unlimited possibilities of what we could accomplish through creating unprecedented partnerships.

Tonight, as I look out at you, at the dawn of a new decade, I am in awe of the infinite possibilities that lie ahead of us.

We can make the most of these opportunities by following the formula of unprecedented partnerships that we have used these past ten years.

Let’s not allow anything dividing our nation to divide our state. Let’s build our friendships based on mutual respect, better communication, and the strengthening of our partnerships.

Let’s work together, day in, and day out, to build a better future.

Let’s work hard.

Let’s make 2020 the best year ever!

My dear friends, there are many others including our children and grandchildren following after us in search of a great life and an even better tomorrow.

Let’s prepare the way for them. Let’s give them hope and opportunity. Let’s show them that we care.

Together, we can be like the pioneers of the past and sow the right seeds, and prepare the trail for those who are yet to follow.

Thank you for your efforts. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless what I think is His favorite state, the great state of Utah.

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On motion of Representative Gibson, the members voted to print the complete text of the Governor’s State Address upon the pages of the Senate and House Journals.

On motion of Representative Gibson, the Committee of the Whole and Joint Convention were dissolved and the Legislature adjourned until Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

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