



# LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

2019 GENERAL SESSION



REPRESENTATIVE JIM DUNNIGAN  
DISTRICT 39



GENERAL SESSION  
WRAP-UP

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# END OF SESSION THOUGHTS

This session marked my 18th general session on the hill. Each year I am increasingly amazed by the way our government works— it is not perfect, but the checks and balances ensured by our constitution make it work.

One of the most remarkable aspects of our government is the role citizens play. Although the session is done, I am always available to meet with my constituents. If you would like to meet, I am able to do so at the Capitol or in my office in Taylorsville. You can reach me via email at [jdunnigan@le.utah.gov](mailto:jdunnigan@le.utah.gov) or by phone at (801)647-7052.

## 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION A Few Of The Things Lawmakers Accomplished This Year

**1 EDUCATION FUNDING** 

**\$280 MILLION**  
In new ongoing money to public education.

**+ HEALTHCARE** **4**

**Health Bills Passed**

- Medicaid now available to those previously in the coverage gap.
- Legal smoking age raised to 21.
- Autism will now be covered in some healthcare plans.
- Enhanced penalties for abuse of a vulnerable or elderly adult.

**2 PUBLIC SAFETY** 

**"Silver Alert"**  
Created to help locate missing persons with dementia. Works like an AMBER alert.

**ADDRESSING OUR BUDGET IMBALANCE** **5**

**Tax Reform Task Force**

To address Utah's budget imbalance, the legislature formed a task force to consider revenue-neutral options to stabilize Utah's funding sources.

**3 CLEAN AIR** 

**\$26 MILLION**  
In new ongoing money to address Utah's air quality.

To learn more about how Utah's tax dollars are used, visit: [budget.utah.gov](http://budget.utah.gov)



## AT THE CAPITOL

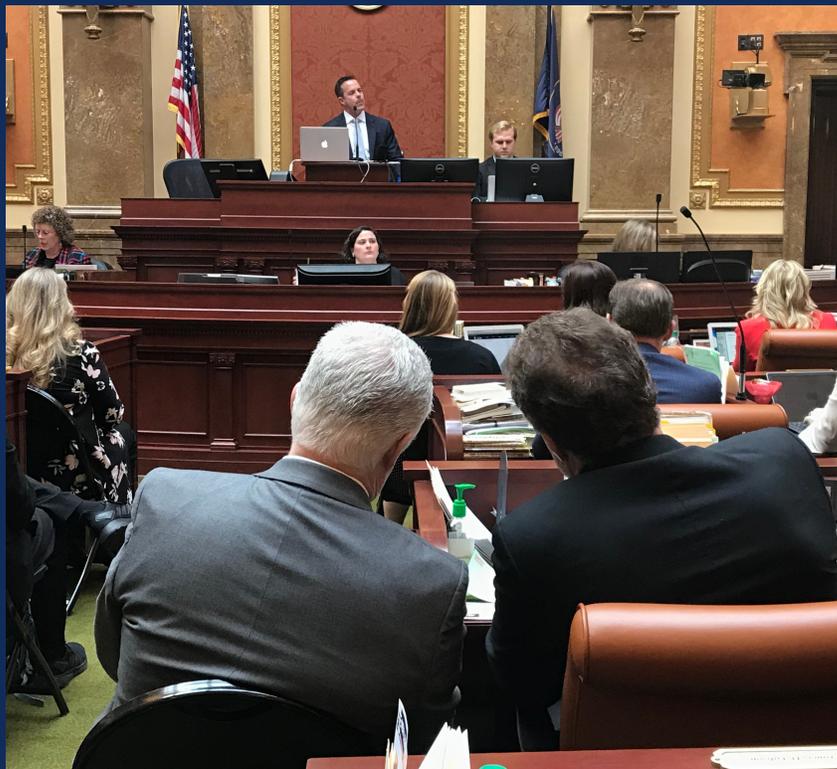
As the session came to a close, most of our time was spent on the House Floor voting on hundreds of bills.

It was a nice change of pace to meet with this group of MPA students from BYU to discuss healthcare throughout the country, and specifically in Utah.

# VISITORS TO THE CAPITOL

Two district 39 constituents came to join me on the House Floor this on the final week.

Hannah is a student at the University of Utah. This semester she had a class that brought her to the Capitol each week, so she thought she'd come see what it's like on the floor.



Val is longtime constituent and friend of mine. He is always present at town hall meetings, and has joined me on the floor before. I'm grateful for his continued involvement.

# 2019 GENERAL SESSION RECAP

During the 2019 Legislative Session the legislature worked hard to address pressing issues in our state. This descriptions below provide some detail of some of the biggest issues from the more than 500 bills that passed both the Utah House and Senate.

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A Few Of The Things Lawmakers Accomplished This Year

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## EDUCATION

### HB 130 Public Education Exit Survey

This bill aims to better understand why educators leave the field and begin working toward a solution to retaining public educators. Local education agencies will now have to create an exit survey for licensed public education employees. The survey will be administered to an educator who is leaving that local education agency, and the results will be sent to the state board.

## SB 4 Public Education Budget Amendments

The weighted pupil unit (WPU) is set at \$3,532 for fiscal year 2020. SB 4 also appropriates \$15 million to the Teacher and Student Success Account and will fund many public education services.

## SB 236 State Board of Education Candidacy Amendments

Previously, candidates running for the State Board of Education were required to run on a non-partisan basis. SB 236 clarifies that an individual may run for the State Board of Education as a member of a political party, unaffiliated, or as a write-in candidate.



## HB 120 (6th Substitute) Student and School Safety Assessment

This bill directs the State Board of Education to establish policies and procedures for student safety, including making amendments to routine evacuation drills. It also directs the Department of Public Safety to employ a public safety liaison. In addition, HB 120 directs the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to employ a school-based mental health specialist.

## HB 71 (1st Sub) Health Education Amendments

HB 71 allows for health education instruction to include information on medical characteristics, effectiveness, limitations, and risks of contraceptive methods or devices.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

### **HB 17 (2nd Substitute) Firearm Violence and Suicide Prevention Amendments**

This bill creates a firearm safety program as well as suicide prevention education course.



### **HB 393 (4th Substitute) Suicide Prevention Amendments**

HB 393 expands the scope of suicide prevention in schools in various ways, including the use of technology. It creates a suicide prevention web-accessible video for certain primary care providers and individuals who have expressed suicide ideation or taken suicidal action. Tragically, Utah has one of the highest suicide rates in the country. We hope and anticipate the measures taken during the legislative session will help reduce the number of lives lost due to suicide.



## CLEAN AIR

### **HB 353 Reduction of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Pilot Program**

This bill provides funding for free-fare transit on select poor air quality days.

### **HB 357 (1st Substitute) Voluntary Wood Burning Conversion Program**

HB 357 incentivizes homeowners to replace wood stoves and fireplaces with natural gas appliances.



### **HB 148 Vehicle Idling Revisions**

Along with encouraging counties and cities to maintain local control, HB discourages the practice of idling cars by removing the requirement that a city provide at least three warnings before they include a fine for idling your car for longer than two minutes. The new law would drop the three-warning requirement to just one.

## TOBACCO & VAPING

### **HB 324 (4th Substitute) Tobacco Age Amendments**

HB 324 moves the minimum age for obtaining, possessing, using, providing, or furnishing tobacco products. It is a tiered system that raises the age from 19 to 20 in the first year and then to 21 years of age in the final year. There is an exemption for military members, their spouses, and their dependents. The use of tobacco and the rise of vaping and e-cigarettes has had a significant effect on the state's youth. We are optimistic the measures passed this session will reduce teen access to and use of these harmful products.



## HATE CRIMES

### **SB 103 (4th Sub) Victim Targeting Penalty Enhancements**

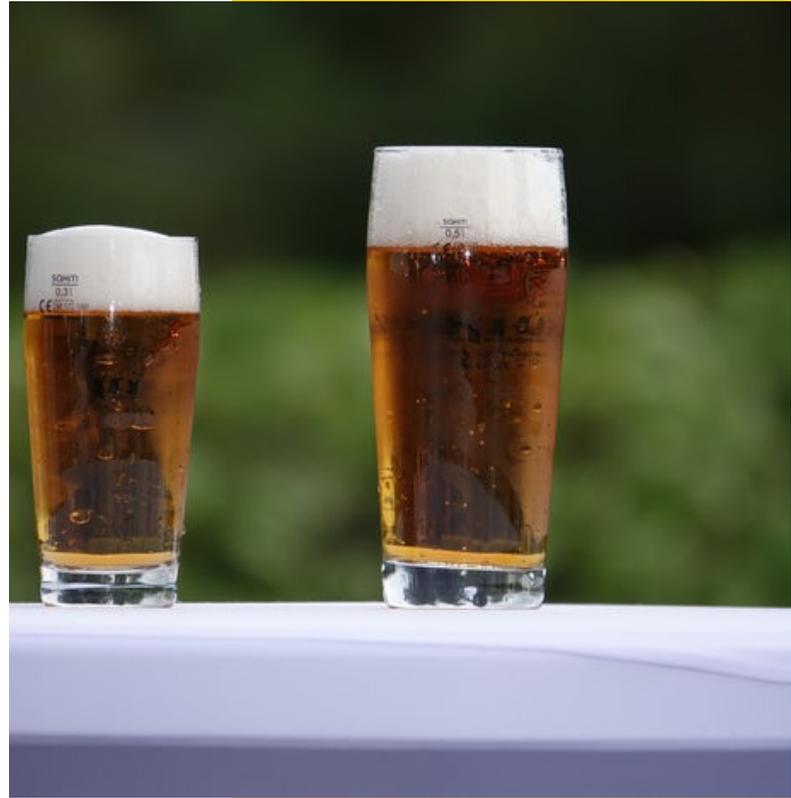
SB 103 provides an enhanced penalty for a criminal offense proven to be committed against a victim who is selected because of certain personal attributes.

This bill does not affect an individual's rights of free speech or other constitutional rights. After extensive deliberation, SB 103 was passed by both bodies of the legislature this year. This bill will provide appropriate punishments for hate-fueled crimes committed against Utah's most vulnerable populations.

## ALCOHOL

### **SB 132 (2nd Sub) Beer Amendments**

SB 132 modifies the permissible percentage of alcohol in beer and heavy beer from 3.2% ABW to 4.0% ABW. In addition, it creates a Beer Availability Workgroup to study issues related to beer availability, alcohol content, and retail practices. This workforce will provide annual reports on their findings.



## MEDICAID

### **SB 96 (4th Sub) Medicaid Expansion Adjustments**

SB 96 closes the “coverage gap” by ensuring that all Utahns at or below 138% of the federal poverty level have access to healthcare options, with enrollment beginning April 1st of this year. SB 96 will put the state on dramatically better financial footing than Proposition 3. Under the original proposition, the state is projected to incur a \$210 million deficit between fiscal years 2019 and 2025. Under SB 96 the state is projected to generate a \$240 million budget surplus. The programs and assistance included in SB 96 will set individuals on a pathway toward self-sufficiency, resulting in improved incomes, improved health, and improved lives of beneficiaries and their families.



## TAX REFORM

### HB 441 Tax Equalization and Reduction Act

HB 441, which did not pass during the 2019 legislative session, aimed to expand the sales tax base to include services while also lowering the sales tax rate significantly, from 4.7% to 3.1%. The bill would also result in a sizable tax cut by lowering the income tax rate from 4.95% to 4.75%. This tax cut would level the playing field and produce critical revenue to fund future growth in the state.



### HB 495 (1st sub) Tax Restructuring and Equalization Task Force

Tax reform will be worked on during the interim, with the intent to broaden the tax base and lower the rate, ensuring a more economically stable and fiscally responsible future for Utah. A task force has been created to explore potential solutions to the structural imbalance in the budget. Utah's structural imbalance and depleting revenue source was a major topic of discussion during the legislative session, and the legislature plans to continue working on and developing a long-term solution to this impending crisis. There has been extensive debate and discussion over what the appropriate solution is, which is why the interim task force was created.