

# 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

## SENATOR LUZ ESCAMILLA

Dear Friends and Constituents,

I could not have completed the 2022 General Session without your kind support and compassionate messages on policy issues that matter most to you and your family in these past months. Thank you for your engagement in the legislative process and your continued care for our community. The greatest positive change in our state comes from different voices and perspectives coming together, and I am so grateful and proud to be representing you in Senate District 1!

In this report, you will find highlights on legislation I sponsored and important information on the state's budget. This session, lawmakers had an exceptional amount of funding to manage and direct to programs to benefit Utahns. Additionally, there were large policy issues we took on as a state in our limited time, including environmental quality, water, the Great Salt Lake, the Inland Port, healthcare, and so much more.

I hope this report can help shine some light on these key issues. You can count on my commitment to working hard with other state leaders, community organizations, and the great people of Utah to ensure the state moves forward on path that uplifts *everyone*.

Warmly,

Senator Luz Escamilla

## My 2022 Legislation

### *S.B. 23, Acupuncturist Liability*

*Amendments:* This bill adds licensed acupuncturists to the list of health care professionals who have limited immunity under certain circumstances for providing volunteer services.

### *S.B. 104, Community Health Worker*

*Certification Process:* This bill is a huge step in providing our community health

workers (CHWs) a greater ability to build trusted relationships with the people they serve. CHWs are critical in addressing the social determinants of health as they assist community members with unmet social needs, promoting resilience and healthy behaviors. The certification pathway created in S.B. 104 will allow CHWs to signal to employers and community members their expertise and critical skillset. Additionally,

certification is the first step in providing Medicaid reimbursement—this will help both employers and community health workers in accessing sustainable funding.

*S.B. 133, Food Security Amendments:* This builds upon my legislation from the 2021 General Session, which created a task force to study and develop a plan for establishing food security in Utah. S.B. 133 creates the Food Security Council, which will be housed out of Utah State University, to coordinate state efforts in addressing food security. The Coalition will examine the barriers to food security; promote programs and activities that contribute to healthy eating and active lifestyles; and develop statewide goals and messaging related to food security and nutrition education.

*S.B. 136, Air Quality Policy Amendments:* This bill requires the Department of Air Quality to study and develop a report of recommendations to the Legislature on a statewide emissions reduction framework. The framework will focus on rural communities; areas surrounding the Inland Port; and areas experiencing disproportionate impacts when it comes to air quality. This bill continues our work to gather information on data-driven, best practices to address air quality in the state of Utah.

*S.B. 195, Medical Cannabis Access Amendments:* This bill provides technical changes as the state's medical cannabis program continues to evolve and addresses provisions related to patient access. It

requires a hospice program to provide at least one qualified medical provider (QMP). QMPs are licensed to prescribe controlled substances, including medical cannabis. It also adds acute pain as a qualifying condition for a limited supply of medical cannabis that a medical professional may prescribe. Additionally, it requires a recommending medical provider to consider a patient's history of substance use or opioid use disorder before recommending medical cannabis.

*S.B. 216, Modifications to Driver License Examination:* This bill allows certain applicants to take the written driver license examination in other languages beyond English. The Driver License Division will be required to consult with the Division of Multicultural Affairs to determine the five most spoken languages in the state and provide examinations in those languages.

★ *S.B. 185, Children's Health Coverage Amendments:* This bill directs the Department of Health to expand eligibility for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to include all Utah children if they meet household income criteria. It also codifies continuous eligibility for children on Medicaid for a 12-month period. When it comes to insuring children, Utah ranks 46th in the Nation. It is unacceptable that an estimated 8.3% of children in Utah do not have health insurance. While this bill did not pass this session, it will continue to be a top priority of my policy agenda. No child should be left behind when it comes to healthcare and held responsible for choices beyond their control. I plan to run this legislation again next year.

# 2022 Budget Highlights

This session, the Legislature approved a \$25.9B budget! I sponsored several requests and secured funding to provide support for programs that administer medically assisted treatment to those suffering from substance abuse and mental health crises. Additionally, I obtained funding to support Utah’s public library infrastructure. Libraries are vital spaces in our communities, providing needed access to reliable broadband, supporting student success, and assisting entrepreneurs and small businesses. Lastly, I am proud to report on the additional funding designed to champion three, new needed receiving centers in rural Utah and in Weber County—this was a top priority for the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Commission.

*Below are some other key highlights on the state’s budget:*

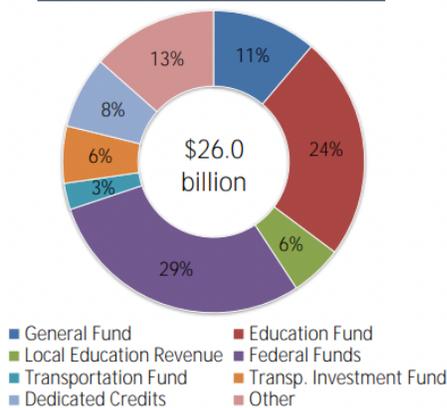
- Transportation infrastructure: \$1.2 billion one-time
- Public Education: 6% increase to the Weighted Pupil Unit (WPU), student enrollment growth, and other items for a total of \$465.5 million ongoing and one-time
- Optional Enhanced Kindergarten Programs -- \$12.2 million ongoing to expand programs in public schools
- Affordable Housing: \$55.0 million one-time from Federal Funds for deeply affordable housing grants; \$6.0 million one-time from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families federal funds for wraparound services; \$1.3 million one-time from the General Fund for affordable and rural workforce housing efforts.
- Medicaid growth: \$64.1 million one-time in FY 2022; \$63.4 million ongoing and \$20.8 million one-time in FY 2023
- New competitive grant programs for arts, history, and heritage projects: \$6.5 million ongoing and \$4.0 million one-time
- Agricultural Water Optimization: \$50.0 million one-time from Federal Funds

## BUDGET OF THE STATE OF UTAH

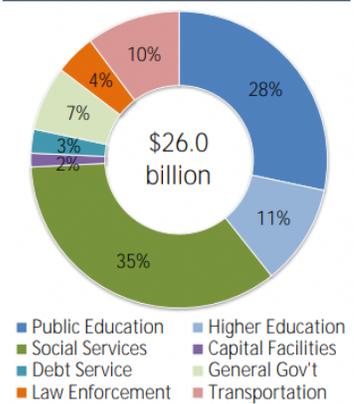
Total (All Funds) - FY 2023: \$25,960,838,900

State Funds (GF/EF/USF) - FY 2023: \$11,631,819,100

Where It Comes From: All Funds



Where It Goes: All Funds



## Statements on Key Votes

*H.B. 443, Utah Inland Port Authority Amendments:* One of my top priorities is to advocate on behalf of my constituents and support the wellbeing of west side communities who are disproportionately impacted. I continue to fight against concentrated development on the west side that weighs on public health, the environment, and quality of life of my constituents. I voted in support of H.B. 443 after working to make the changes reflected in the 3rd Substitute to provide for mitigation projects, specifically for the west side of Salt Lake City. H.B. 443 directs property tax revenue to address noise pollution, air pollution, light pollution, surface and groundwater pollution, and other negative environmental impacts.

*H.B. 440, Homeless Services Amendments:* I believe it is critical our unsheltered neighbors have a safe place to go and have access to resources to start rebuilding their lives. Anybody who wants shelter—especially during the cold, winter months—should have a roof over their head at a minimum. Salt Lake City has continually stepped up, year after year, to not only house individuals in homeless resource centers (HRCs), but to also address temporary overflow when there are no beds available in HRCs. H.B. 440 places Salt Lake City back in the difficult position of disproportionately bearing the cost of sheltering individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the state of Utah. The resources to address homelessness should not be concentrated in one municipality—we need to invest and share the issue statewide.

*H.B. 11, Student Eligibility in Interscholastic Activities:*  
All Senate Democrats fought hard to address the deep concerns in a rushed, substitute bill that was unveiled in the final few hours of the 2022 General Session. This bill implements a ban on transgender youth from participating in “female-designated” sports in our public school system. We voted in firm opposition due to several concerns and unanswered questions. This bill unnecessarily hurts children and will potentially put them and their families in the distressing position of appearing before a politically appointed commission to participate in interscholastic activities if the over-all ban is overturned in court. This policy and process is certainly not the “Utah way.”



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