

# 2024 Legislative Session Newsletter

SEN. ESCAMILLA



Jan- Mar 2024



## Here's what has happened throughout the 2024 General Session!

As I reflect on the recent legislative session, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve as your voice in the Utah State Senate; representing the vibrant communities of the west side of Salt Lake City, West Valley City and Magna.

Throughout my time as your Senator, my unwavering commitment to the well-being and prosperity of our district has remained steadfast. I have approached every decision with a deep sense of responsibility, knowing that each choice made in the legislature directly impacts the lives of those I am proud to represent. As a legislator, I am acutely aware of the diverse needs and challenges facing our communities. From advocating for affordable access to quality healthcare, to championing economic development initiatives that uplift all residents,

my dedication to addressing the issues that matter most to you has never wavered.

Your voices, experiences, and perspectives are invaluable to me, and I am committed to being a responsive and accessible advocate for each and every one of you. In this legislative session report, I am eager to share with you the progress we've made, the challenges we've faced, and the victories we've achieved together. It is my hope that this report serves as a testament to our collective efforts and the positive impact we can continue to make when we work together towards a brighter future for Senate District 10 and all of Utah.

Enjoy this session's newsletter!

*Senator Luz Escamilla*

*follow my new instagram!*



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# Legislative Recap

In total, 1,487 bills and resolutions were requested. Of those, 591 bills passed. 5 of my proposed bills and 7 bills that I was the Senate sponsor for passed and have been sent to the Governor for his signature. We passed a \$29 billion budget which covers transportation, economic development, public and higher education, affordable housing, and more.

Here is an overview of my legislative proposals:

## BILLS THAT PASSED



### S.B. 35 Infertility Treatment Coverage

This bill makes permanent the benefit for infertility treatment (IVF) for PEHP insurance policy holders.



### S.B. 175 Designation of Ballet West's the Nutcracker as a State Landmark

This bill designates Willam Christensen's iconic ballet, "The Nutcracker" as a living historic landmark of our state. Ballet West proudly presents the first and original version of the ballet in the U.S.



### S.B. 181 Native American Health

This bill allows Indian Health Services (IHS) and Tribal facilities to receive reimbursement for qualified Traditional Medicine services provided for their Medicaid beneficiaries for American Indian and American Native beneficiaries who reside in Utah.



### S.B. 233 Medical Cannabis Amendments

This is the annual cannabis cleanup bill. It addresses issues of protection of government employees that are card holders, creating a mechanism of due process. Additionally, it continues to define targeted marketing and establishes a process investigate and regulate potential anticompetitive practices.



### S.B. 246 Juvenile Justice Modifications

This bill requires that a notification of a juvenile court regarding a student be maintained in an LEA for a year and follow the student if the student transfers schools.

## My Funded Appropriation Requests:



The Children's Center Early Childhood Mental Services  
\$1,000,000 One-time

Funds will support children's mental health treatment through Clinical Outpatient and Therapeutic Preschool Program Services to strengthen statewide expansion framework. In this program, children receive intensive group therapy to gain resilience and learn essential skills that will allow them to succeed in a traditional preschool and kindergarten settings.



The Neighborhood House  
\$1,000,000 annually for 3 years

Funding will fill in the gap between what it costs to provide high quality early education daycare and what low-income families can afford to pay. The Neighborhood House serves many families in the westside of Salt Lake City.



Utah Consular Corps  
\$30,000 One-time

This request will support the Utah Consular Corps, who facilitate diplomatic relations, promote international cooperation, and foster cultural exchange within the state of Utah and foreign nations.



SLC Mosquito Abatement and Education Project  
\$51,000 One-time

This project and the educational programs are intended to increase educational opportunities for the incarcerated to assist in professional development and increase job opportunities after release. The programs will also assist in a native, endemic species of concern, the Least Chub fish, conservation, provide a biological control for mosquitoes, educate inmates and correctional staff, and help lessen the burden of mosquitoes at the USCF to increase public health.

## BILLS THAT DID NOT PASS

## Key Votes: H.B. 257 & H.B. 261

I opposed both H.B. 261, Equal Opportunity Initiatives and H.B. 257, Sex-based Designations for Privacy, Anti-bullying, and Women's Opportunities. My opposition to these bills is based in the following problems:

### H.B. 257

This bill unfairly targets transgender individuals by restricting their access to restrooms and changing rooms that align with their gender identity. This discriminatory legislation not only violates the rights and dignity of transgender people but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and stigmatization. It is a step backward in our ongoing fight for equality and acceptance of all. As this bill is implemented, I have significant concerns about the constitutionality and the legal challenges that we will face as a state, which will result in irresponsible utilization of state funding.

### H.B. 261

This bill, which prohibits mandatory programs discussing personal identity characteristics like race, ethnicity, and gender identity, effectively eliminates vital diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in public institutions. These programs are essential for fostering knowledge, understanding, empathy, and respect among our diverse population. By restricting their implementation, we are erasing the progress we have made in building a more inclusive society.

As your senator, I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences of these laws. I worry about the impact they will have on our economy, including struggles in recruiting a diverse and talented workforce in all areas. Additionally, I am concerned about the message these laws send to our youth, particularly those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Most importantly, I worry about the harm and injustice they will inflict upon members of our communities.

In the face of such adversity, I stand in solidarity with those who will be hurt by these laws. In my capacity as a lawmaker, I pledge to continue fighting for equity, justice, and dignity for all Utahns, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, national origin, or any other personal identities.



### S.B. 176 Child Care Services

This bill would establish a pilot program in Salt Lake County to retrofit vacant state-owned properties into affordable high-quality childcare facilities (meeting DHHS licensing requirement). Businesses would then partner with the state an access the properties through a no cost lease agreement. 60% of the daycare center's capacity would be designated for partnering businesses' employees. The remaining 40% would be allocated to accommodate the children of low income working families, state employees, and military personnel.

I was dissapointed that this bill did not pass since it was the only bill that created a mechanism to address our child care crisis and had a small level of investment towards child care infrastructure in our state. I will continue to work on this legislation and other solutions immediately.



### S.B. 85 Medicaid Doula Services

This bill authorizes Medicaid to cover doula services. A doula provides emotional, physical, and informational support before, during, and after labor and birth. This bill helps support healthy moms and babies. Evidence shows direct savings when utilizing Doulas. I have been trying to pass this bill for the last two sessions and it is getting stalled in the House due to a distaste for Medicaid.

## Bills I was the Senate Sponsor for:

- H.B. 20 Parental Rights Amendments
- H.B. 35 Metro Township Modifications
- H.B. 45 Safeut and School Safety Commission Amendments
- H.B. 278 Inmate Education Amendments
- H.B. 322 Sexual Assault Investigation Amendments
- H.B. 461 Child Care Grant Amendments
- H.C.R. 4 Concurrent Resolution Proclaiming World Refugee Day

# Budget Highlights

The Utah Legislature concluded it's 2024 General Session with a Budget of \$29.4 billion for fiscal year 2025. The budget includes \$12.9 billion from the sales-taxed backed General Fund and the Income Tax Fund. Some key appropriations to note are:

### Transportation:

- Allocations of \$330.0 million ongoing and \$775.0 million one-time for infrastructure and transportation projects

### Public Education:

- \$211.7 million allocation to increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit (WPU) value by 5.0%
- \$57.0 million for at-risk students and digital teaching tools
- \$40.0 million for scholarships
- \$440.0 million in one-time projects from the Public Education Economic Stabilization Account

### Higher Education:

- \$20.0 million for university performance funding
- \$7.0 million ongoing and \$5.0 million one-time for technical colleges
- \$160.0 million one-time for new building construction

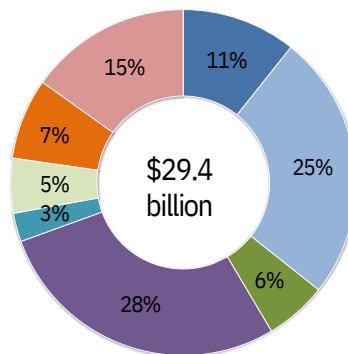
### Affordable Housing:

- \$17.0 million to support subsidized loans under the Utah Homes Investment Program
- \$3.0 million for Shared Equity Revolving Loan Program
- \$3.0 million for the Law Enforcement First Time Home Buyer Program

### Homelessness:

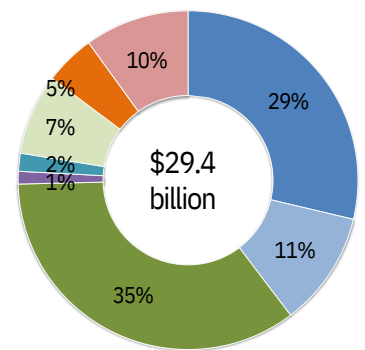
- \$10.0 million ongoing and \$11.8 million one-time for Low-barrier Shelter
- \$2.6 million for mitigation

Where It Comes From: All Funds



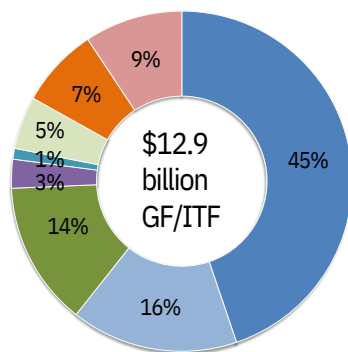
- General Fund
- Local Education Revenue
- Transportation Fund
- Dedicated Credits
- Income Tax Fund
- Federal Funds
- Transp. Investment
- Fund Other

Where It Goes: All Funds



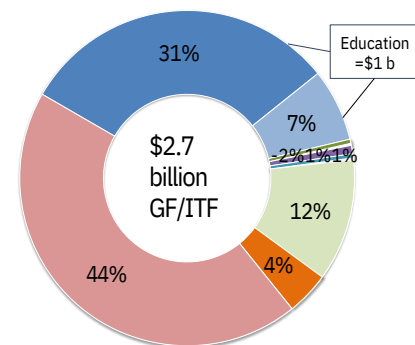
- Public Education
- Social Services
- Debt Service
- Law Enforcement
- Higher Education
- Capital Facilities
- General Gov't
- Transportation

Where it Goes: State Funds Only



- Public Education
- Social Services
- Debt Service
- Law Enforcement
- Higher Education
- Other Capital Budgets
- General Gov't
- Transportation

Where It Goes: New State Funds\*



- Public Education
- Social Services
- Economic Development
- Law Enforcement
- Higher Education
- State Buildings
- General Gov't/Other
- Transportation

\* Note: Includes budgetary transfers and one-time expenditures from the Public Education Economic Stabilization Account. Final Data will be Reported in the Annual Budget of the State of Utah, May 2024.



## Fair Park District & MLB Stadium

In this session we passed H.B. 562, *Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District*. This bill is critical to our district, and specifically to the westside of Salt Lake City, as it creates the Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District in Salt Lake City as a political subdivision of the state. The bill creates the boundaries of the district, covering an area in the vicinity of the current state fair park in Salt Lake City. The purpose of the district is to encourage and facilitate development within the district boundaries, including the construction of a qualified stadium and related facilities for a major league sports team. The bill creates a board to govern the district and authorizes the board to levy specified taxes within the district boundaries.

Establishing stadium funding revenue sources and structure:

- 1.5 % increase state-wide to the car rental tax, triggered once a franchise agreement is signed
- State sales tax generated within the district will remain in the district

Additionally, the bill establishes a board that will be responsible to govern the district. It was of utmost importance to me that this board included direct community representation and I am proud to say that, per my request, one of the five voting members will be a representative from the West Side Coalition. This will be crucial to ensure that the West Side community voices are adequately represented and respected.

I want to make sure to emphasize how positive this will be for our district. We have been waiting for an economic investment like this for decades. We are looking forward to seeing a private investment of **over \$3.5 Billion** for the clean up of Jordan River and North Temple, and other public safety investments.

This project has the potential to be the catalyst that the West Side has been waiting for to achieve prosperity. We are committed to continuing to engage in constructive dialogue that guarantees its inclusive development, encompassing business, housing, and recreation alike; fundamentally maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for our West Side residents, impacting the whole state of Utah.