

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

JANUARY 20, 2026



# Retiring Legislators

## Senators

- Ann Millner (D5)
- Jerry Stevenson (D6)
- Nate Blouin (D13)

## Representatives

- Matthew Gwynn (D6)
- Karen Peterson (D12)
- Karianne Lisonbee (D14)
- Stewart Barlow (D17)
- Sandra Hollins (D21)
- Bridger Bolinder (D29)
- Carol S. Moss (D34)
- Cheryl Acton (D38)
- Mike Kohler (D59)
- Tyler Clancy (D60)
- Christine Watkins (D67)

# SENATE PRIORITIES 2026

- Energy grid
- Guardrails on government, and particularly the judiciary
- Data Privacy and digital freedom
- Water – infrastructure, conservation, planning
- Election integrity

# HOUSE PRIORITIES 2026

- Reigning in property tax
- Home ownership
- Cutting government spending
- Constitutional amendment
- Homelessness
- Infrastructure – aging water systems and limited storage

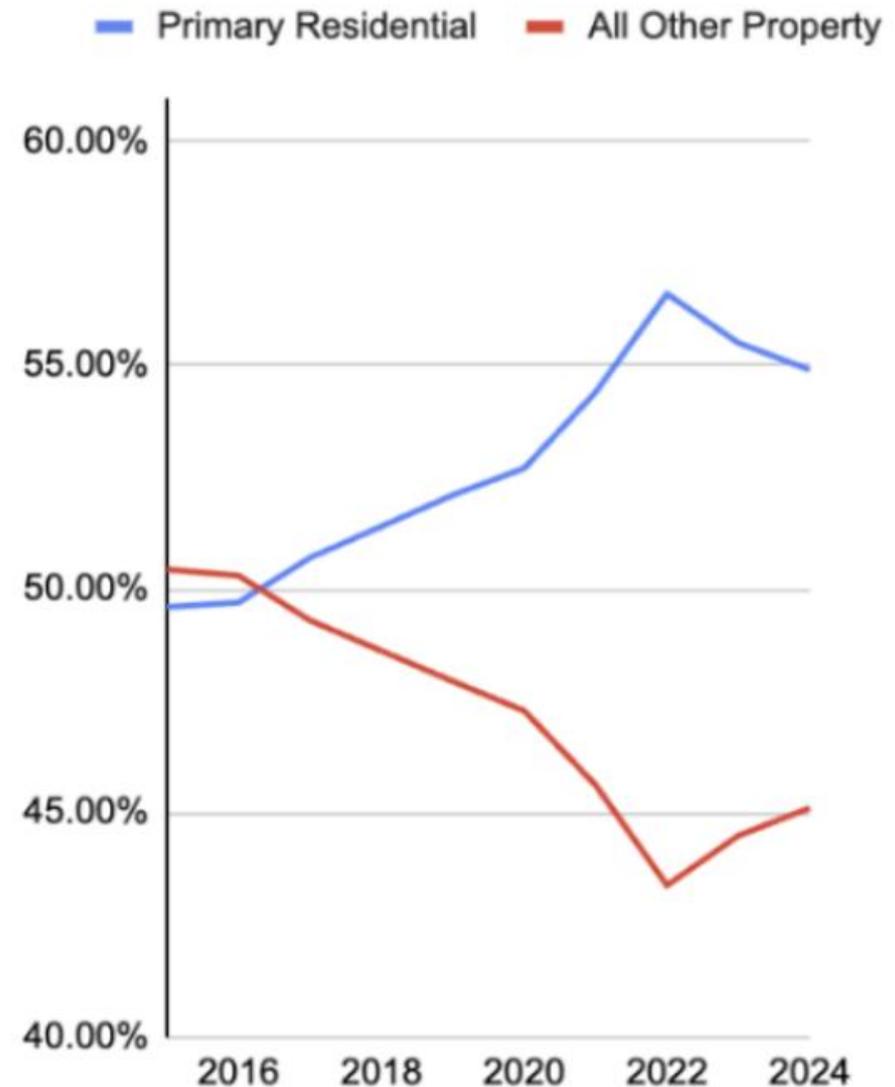
# The Property Tax Burden in Utah has Shifted to Homeowners

## Reining In Property Tax

Utahns are feeling the pinch of increasing property taxes. Over the past few years, local governments and school districts have approved high property tax increases. Additionally, increases in home values relative to other property types have skewed the property tax burden borne by Utah homeowners.

Utahns deserve to have their voices heard when decisions are made about how property taxes are levied and spent so that any tax increase is not only justified, but necessary to provide essential services citizens depend on.

**We'll take steps to reduce property taxes for Utah homeowners and ensure taxpayers can make their voices heard on local property tax increases.**



# Keeping Homeownership Within Reach

Utah families deserve the chance to build a life, own a home, and put down roots in the communities they love. Lawmakers have cut red tape and empowered cities and the free market to meet demand, so the next generation can afford to live, work, and raise families here. There is still more to be done to keep the American Dream within reach for new homeowners and maintain the quality of life we all know and love.

**The Legislature will help cities invest in the infrastructure needed to bring new homes onto the market at prices Utahns can afford. We will also work to improve coordination between state, local, and private partners to ensure new homeownership opportunities strengthen communities rather than straining them.**

**By supporting infrastructure, simplifying regulations, and letting the free market work, Utah will make homeownership a reality and keep the American Dream alive.**



OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS ARE NOW COMPLETED WITHIN ONE BUSINESS DAY, THANKS TO H.B. 58 (2025) **LOWERING BUILDING COSTS**

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That's **three times faster** than the required standard

**This year, Utah voters will have the chance to approve a constitutional amendment that restores the balance our founders intended. It reaffirms that Utah's laws should be shaped and updated by the elected representatives who are accountable to Utahns — not locked in place by outside interests or unelected judges.**

**We are challenging all levels of government – cities, counties, school districts, and even ourselves – to take a hard look at their budgets and cut anything that isn't benefiting Utahns or is better delivered by Utah's businesses, non-profits, or citizens.**

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN COVERS OF UTAH V. UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

- 2018 - Utah voters passed Proposition 4, which established Independent Redistricting Commission and banned partisan gerrymandering.
- 2020 – Legislature passed SB 200 which repealed ban on gerrymandering (except as to commission) but made the commission advisory only.
- 2022 - LWVUT & Mormon Women for Ethical Government sued in 3<sup>rd</sup> judicial district for Salt Lake County claiming SB 200 violated UT Constitution's right to direct lawmaking through ballot initiative, equal protection, free speech and association, and right to vote.

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN COVERS OF UTAH V. UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

- July 2024 – Utah Supreme Court allows plaintiffs to proceed with claim that SB 200 violated state constitutional right to alter and reform government. Remanded to trial court and ordered to apply strict scrutiny analysis to SB 200
- August 2025 – State trial court struck down the state’s congressional districts, enjoined SB 200, and ordered new map be created.
- October 2025 – Utah legislature passes remedial map “Option C” (SB 1012).
- November 2025 – State trial court rejects legislature’s remedial map.
- Appeal to Utah Supreme Court.

## Tackling Aging Infrastructure & Insufficient Supply

Across the state, aging water systems and limited storage threaten our ability to meet future needs.

In 2024, lawmakers passed H.B. 280 to strengthen coordination between state and local agencies and ensure every taxpayer dollar is used wisely to support Utah's long-term water needs.

**The Legislature is taking the same long-term approach to water as it does for roads—investing in reliable infrastructure, expanding storage, and maintaining the systems that will keep the taps running for generations to come.**

By 2060, Utah will need an estimated

**\$38 Billion**

for drinking water infrastructure

**\$15 Billion**

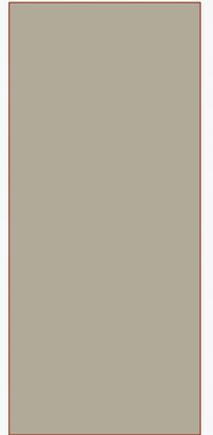
for water quality upgrades and

**\$6 Billion**

for irrigation and canal improvements

ULCT

2026



# DRAFT LEGISLATION

S.B. 97 Property Tax  
Rate Amendments  
(D. McCay)



1. Taxing entity may not raise property tax more than 5%
2. Change definition of “locally assessed new growth”
  - a. current definition, “minus any change in value to property as a result of physical improvements, that is less than 100% higher than the taxable value of the property for the previous year”
3. “Project area new growth” for certain entities does not include a change in value for tangible personal property
  - a. most tax increment financing tools

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 161 Property Tax  
Modifications  
(J. Koford)



Requires a constitutional amendment (HJR7)

Currently, a primary residential unit is taxed at 55% of its value

HB 161 would tax a primary residential unit at 40% of its value

Intent:

- reduce tax burden on homeowners
- maintain revenue for taxing entities

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Auxier)

## What Is Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR)?

- Constitutional limit on revenue + spending growth tied to **inflation + population growth or other set percentage**.
- **Refund of surplus revenues** to taxpayers when revenue exceeds the cap.
- **Voter approval** required for new tax increases.
- Flexibility in how rebates are returned (credits, rate reductions, checks).

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD: Rep. Karen  
Peterson  
Truth in Taxation  
Amendments

Staff recommendation:

## Problems to solve:

- public concern that entity has started their new budget by the Aug Truth in Taxation hearing & thus the tax proceeds

## Part 1: required preliminary property tax increase meeting

- In May/early June, taxing entity shall notify public of the intent to raise property taxes
  - shall do May/June mtg or you can't do Aug TinT hearing
- notice & meeting shall include "approximate" dollar and percentage amounts

## Part 2: "tentative operating budget"

- adopt a budget that does not include the proposed property tax increase revenue
- present an "alternate tentative budget" with the

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 68 Housing  
Amendments (C. Roberts)



Staff Recommendation:  
Support (w/amendments)

**This bill is mostly technical but makes changes in three main categories:**

- i. *State Agency Restructuring of Housing Programs*
  - Creates Division of Housing at GOEO and structures state-level housing programming under this division
- ii. *Grant, Sale, or Lease of government properties*
- iii. *Repeals the Commission on Housing Affordability, the low-income ADU loan guarantee pilot program, the subordinate shared appreciation loan program, and the Housing and Community Development Division within the Dept. of Workforce Services*

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 184 Local Land Use  
Revisions (R. Ward)



Staff Recommendation:  
**Oppose** (as drafted)

- **“Preferred land use regulation” = starter homes, 5,400 sq. ft. lots, and IADUs/DADUs**
- Applicant submits a request that a municipality accept a preferred land use regulation as part of a development application
- If municipal staff determines that part of the application qualifies as a preferred land use regulation, a planning commission or legislative body has 30 days to approve or deny request for preferred land use regulation

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 184 Local Land Use  
Revisions (R. Ward)



Staff Recommendation:  
**Oppose** *as drafted*

- To deny, planning commission/Council must make findings on the record that cons outweigh pros for the community and deny by majority vote
- 31 days after applicant submits request with no action from the planning commission or council, the preferred land use regulation becomes a vested permitted use for that property

1/9 LPC Housing Advisory Subgroup Slido: 74% very or somewhat concerned

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Koford)  
Land Use Task  
Force/CHA

- technical clean ups to **HB 368** (done)
- **planning commission** training req'ts (done)
- **planning commission** removal/recusal process (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- shall allow **detached accessory dwelling units** under certain conditions (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- delete req't to have **annexation policy plans** (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- clarify **incorporation process** due to the West Hills court decision (still negotiating)
- **“reasonable diligence”** definition (Board/LPC advisory

# DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Roberts)

## Infrastructure funding partnership

- bill coming soon
- focus on state \$ for system infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.) with a nexus to housing units that promote affordable home ownership

# DETACHED ADU BY RIGHT

- MHP cities or all cities?
- Minimum lot size?
- City to control setbacks.
- Compliance with all building, health and fire codes.
- Either primary home or ADU must be owner-occupied.
- City to control rentals (e.g., at least 90 consecutive days)
- ADU may not exceed size of primary unit.
- Cannot require more than 2 parking spaces
- Do not allow in front yard.
- Impact fees proportional to infrastructure demand created.
- No design standards except generally consistent with primary.
- DADU by right so long as meet safety, setback and parking requirements.