



## Utah – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

11th Edition – 2025

### Summary

**The eleventh edition** of the Utah CPAC Scorecard analyzes 18 critical votes in the Utah House of Representatives and 18 pivotal bills in the Utah Senate from the 2024 Regular Session. The findings reveal a legislature that, despite Utah's national reputation as a conservative standard-bearer, often fell short of consistently advancing the principles of limited government and personal liberty that many Utahns expect.

In the Utah House, **Republicans averaged 74%**, a figure that, while certainly stronger than their Democratic counterparts, still reflects considerable room for improvement given the GOP's overwhelming majority. House Democrats, by contrast, recorded a predictably low **16%**, underscoring their steady opposition to free-market policies and constitutional safeguards. The **overall House average came in at 66%**, sustained mainly by Republican alignment, though weakened by instances where lawmakers embraced policies at odds with conservative fiscal discipline.

The Utah Senate displayed similar patterns. Republican Senators averaged only **70%**, a level of performance that does not match the strong conservative reputation of the state. Senate Democrats posted an average of **2%**, highlighting a near-total endorsement of progressive priorities. This left the chamber with an overall average of just **57%**, a figure that underscores how frequently the Senate's actions drifted from core conservative goals.

This session did produce notable conservative victories, with lawmakers advancing measures to protect state sovereignty, reduce targeted taxes, dismantle DEI bureaucracies, and safeguard both parental rights and the Second Amendment. However, these successes were frequently accompanied by a bipartisan willingness to direct taxpayer resources toward favored industries, expand local taxing powers, and increase government involvement in Utah's housing market. For a state often looked to as a conservative benchmark, the 2024 session exposed concerning inconsistencies and highlighted the need for stronger, more reliable commitment to the foundational ideals of economic freedom, constitutional governance, and personal responsibility.

## **Key Takeaways**

### **Utah Leads the Fight Against Federal Overreach and Regulatory Tyranny**

Through measures like **SB 57**, which blocks state officials from enforcing unconstitutional federal directives, and **HB 470**, preparing Utah's attorney general to dismantle regulatory regimes if Chevron deference falls, Utah has positioned itself as a model for constitutional federalism. This assertive posture sets Utah apart nationally, making it one of the most proactive states in confronting Washington's creeping control over state affairs.

### **A Strong Stand for Cultural Sanity and Individual Liberties**

Utah's legislature advanced multiple bills that reaffirm the state's deep commitment to protecting families, students, and constitutional rights. Laws such as **HB 257**, which prohibits men from entering women's locker rooms, and **HB 29**, which establishes procedures to root out pornographic materials in schools, defend Utah values against the cultural radicalism sweeping the country. Meanwhile, **HB 261** struck a direct blow to state-sponsored racism by banning mandatory DEI trainings and race-based hiring in government, preserving the foundational principle of equality under the law.

### **Robust Tax Cuts Tempered by a Dangerous Drift Toward Government-Driven "Economic Development"**

The passage of **SB 69**, reducing Utah's income and corporate tax rates, highlighted a strong commitment to tax relief. Yet the same legislature approved bills like **SB 268**, **SB 272**, **HB 562**, and **HB 572**, which create special taxing districts and funnel hundreds of millions of dollars into government-orchestrated housing schemes. These contradictions reveal a legislature willing to slash taxes broadly while simultaneously expanding selective subsidies and local taxation, undercutting the very free-market principles the tax cuts are meant to advance.

### **Utah Republicans Provided the Backbone of Conservative Governance**

With House Republicans averaging **74%** and Senate Republicans averaging **70%**, it's clear the GOP caucuses served as the primary bulwarks against progressive overreach and cronyist policy. Nearly all meaningful resistance to government expansion, cultural degradation, and economic distortion came from Republican legislators standing firm on conservative principles.

## **Highlighted Votes Analyzed**

### **HB 572 – More Government Interference in Utah’s Housing Market**

This bill creates the Utah Homes Investment Program, which will use \$300,000,000 of public funds to issue loans to housing developers. CPAC believes taxpayers should not be placed on the hook to fund affordable housing and opposed this bill. The House passed it on February 28, 2024 by a vote of 66-4, and the Senate passed it by a vote of 22-1. It later became law.

### **HB 257 – No Men in Women’s Locker Rooms in Utah**

This bill prohibits men from entering women’s locker rooms and other public spaces designed to protect the privacy of women. CPAC supports efforts to protect women’s spaces and supported this bill. The House passed it on January 26, 2024 by a vote of 58-16, and the Senate passed it by a vote of 20-8. It later became law.

### **HB 261 – Breaking the Grip of DEI in Utah**

This bill prohibits governmental employers from requiring potential and current employees to attend DEI trainings and bars the government from hiring people based on their race. CPAC opposes racism in government decision-making and supported this bill. The House passed it on January 26, 2024 by a vote of 60-14, and the Senate passed it on January 25, 2024 by a vote of 23-6. It later became law.

### **SB 69 – Cutting Utah’s Income and Corporate Taxes**

This bill lowers the state income and corporate tax rates from 4.65% to 4.55%. CPAC supports broad tax reductions and supported this bill. The House passed it on February 28, 2024 by a vote of 63-11, and the Senate passed it on January 31, 2024 by a vote of 23-6. It later became law.

### **SB 57 – Protecting Utah’s State Sovereignty**

This bill prohibits state government officials from enforcing federal directives if the legislature determines that the federal government is violating the state’s sovereignty. CPAC supports efforts to protect Utah from federal overreach and supported this bill. The House passed it on January 30, 2024 by a vote of 57-14, and the Senate passed it on the same day by a vote of 24-5. It later became law.

## **Trends and Observations**

### **A Red State Still Flirting with Blue-State Economic Tools**

Despite Utah's sterling record on taxes and social issues, the legislature continues to lean on special economic districts, targeted subsidies, and complex loan programs that echo the policies of big-government states like California and New York. Measures such as **HB 572**, which directs \$300 million in public funds to housing developers, and **HB 562**, which sets up a tax-heavy special stadium district, exemplify a creeping corporatism that risks turning Utah into a laboratory of selective government favoritism.

### **Utah as the Vanguard of the Anti-DEI, Anti-Woke Movement**

Few states have confronted DEI and identity-based hiring schemes as directly as Utah did this session. **HB 261** stands as one of the strongest anti-DEI measures in the nation, banning both mandatory trainings and racial quotas in state employment. This aggressive stance cements Utah's position on the front lines of the fight against institutionalized racism and progressive orthodoxy, offering a legislative blueprint for other conservative states.

### **Deep Partisan Polarization on Foundational Issues**

With House Democrats averaging **16%** and Senate Democrats at **2%**, it's clear that Utah's ideological divisions are not merely mild differences of emphasis but yawning chasms. Democrats overwhelmingly voted against measures protecting state sovereignty, parental rights, gun ownership, and constitutional safeguards. This level of polarization suggests that nearly every major policy victory for Utah families and taxpayers rests on continued Republican unity and vigilance.

### **Growing Defenses of Religious Liberty and the Second Amendment**

From **HB 119**, which allows teachers to store biometric firearms to protect students, to **HB 460**, which ensures government employees are not forced to violate their religious convictions, Utah took deliberate steps to embed constitutional freedoms into everyday state operations. These bills signal a legislature intent on making Utah an inhospitable place for future progressive campaigns to erode the Bill of Rights.

### **An Urgent Need for Even Stronger Fiscal Leadership**

While Utah remains a model for cultural and constitutional conservatism, its growing appetite for state-managed economic projects is a flashing warning light for fiscal hawks. True conservatives in Utah must redouble efforts to ensure that tax cuts are paired with spending restraint and that the state does not slip into the bipartisan habit of using taxpayer money to favor specific industries or regional pet projects.

## **Conservative Excellence - Senate**

**Heidi Balderree - 100%**

## **Conservative Excellence - House**

**Kera Birkeland - 100%**

**Ken Ivory - 94%**

**Mike Kohler - 92%**

## **Conservative Achievement - Senate**

**Lincoln Fillmore - 80%**

**John Johnson - 89%**

**Michael Kennedy - 88%**

**Wayne Harper - 81%**

## **Conservative Achievement - House**

**Scott Chew - 81%**

**Keven Stratton - 83%**

**Norman Thurston - 88%**

**Karen Peterson - 81%**

**Jason Kyle - 88%**

**Mike Petersen - 89%**

**Tim Jimenez - 82%**

**Phil Lyman - 88%**

**Kay Christofferson - 89%**

**Steven Lund - 82%**

**Mark Strong - 88%**

**Candice Pierucci - 80%**