

# Utah Legislative Agenda

*Utah faces unprecedented challenges brought on by a global pandemic, economic shut down, and civil unrest. AFP-Utah's legislative agenda seeks to provide a roadmap for lawmakers to address these challenges and put Utah back on the path to prosperity.*

## Health Care Reform

Utah [laws and regulations](#) impose licensing and practice barriers on health care providers that have reduced access to medical care for years and have resulted in harsh realities from doctor shortages to unreasonably high costs for services and products. People experienced the positive benefits of easing these restrictions as soon as lawmakers temporarily eased them in response to COVID-19 with the goal of increasing access to quality, affordable care. We need to push our legislators to make these temporary changes permanent by expanding scope of practice, allowing more providers to offer telemedicine to patients, and authorizing out-of-state providers to practice in the state by removing these barriers for both in person and virtual services.

## Educational Freedom

Every child in Utah deserves access to educational opportunities through a system that allows administrators, educators, and families to work together to tailor education to the unique needs of individual students. Fifty percent of Utah's education funding is restricted in use making it difficult for principals to take full advantage of those funds. Those that are closest to students are best positioned to decide how to utilize school funding. We must work with lawmakers to make Utah's education system more flexible for school leaders and administrators easing restrictions on education funding so that resources can more closely follow the child.

## Economic Opportunity

Utah is known for being one of the best tax climates in the country which has encouraged both individuals and businesses to move to the state. Lawmakers can build upon recent legislative successes to pass significant legislation in 2021 that truly welcomes new residents and businesses to the state. Unlike economic development incentives or targeted tax credits, the following changes will benefit all residents and businesses. This could be accomplished by further expanding licensing reciprocity and recognition to allow for licensed professionals to practice in our state and to advocate for tangible personal property tax reform for small businesses.

## Free Expression

Free expression is the corner stone of higher education. It enables students to freely engage with one another and explore new ideas. Speech codes and restrictions can have a chilling effect on public discourse amongst students. AFP-UT will advocate for legislation that will ensure our universities ease these restrictions to ensure students are able to encounter different ideas and perspectives that push them to think critically.





## Criminal Justice Reform

We have successfully worked with a diverse group of coalition partners to build support for crucial criminal justice reforms in our state. We will continue with this approach, focusing exclusively on common sense reforms that eliminate laws that fail to improve public safety outcomes and trap individuals in an endless cycle of poverty. Policies that we plan to tackle include prevention of driver's license suspension for unpaid fines and fees, ensuring risk-based pretrial policies, and improvements to existing policing practices from de-escalation training to search and seizure.



## Technology and Innovation

Burdensome rules and regulations are stifling innovation in Utah – preventing our state from reaching its full potential as a leader in American commerce. The legislature has the opportunity to pass several reforms this session to protect free speech online, eliminate existing nonfunctional regulations, limit and monitor the introduction of new regulations, as well as advocate for the expansion of the regulatory “sandbox” bill that passed in recent years.

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