

Monthly Update - Senator Aaron Osmond

April 2014

Saturday, May 10, 2014

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Much has happened since my last update at the end of March. It has been a very busy 6 weeks. I have much to share with you and look forward to meeting with you soon - in person! Until then, I hope you enjoy this written update.

Caucus and County and State Conventions – Congratulations to Our New Delegates!

Over the last 6 weeks we held our Caucus Meetings, selected our new Delegates, and completed our County and State Conventions. I am so grateful for these important political events and to those that actively participate in them. I want to congratulate all the new state and county Delegates who were willing to accept nomination to this important role. I also want to remind Delegates that the completion of the Convention meetings is not the completion of your role or responsibility. Each of you was elected to stay engaged in the political process for the next two years. During your 2-year term your neighbors are relying on you to engage in policy discussions with your elected officials, and to hold us accountable in the work that we do at the Capitol. I am counting on you to be engaged with me and the other elected officials in our area!

What You Can Expect from Me as Your State Senator?

My job is to represent the citizens of District 10 and the values and principles we collectively expect from our elected leaders. It is also my job to keep you informed and engaged in the policy debates happening within our state. I am committed to sharing with you what is happening, discuss policy issues with you, and seek to understand the will of the people in my district as I craft legislation and influence policy outcomes in the State Legislature. I seek to accomplish this goal in two ways:

- a. **Monthly Newsletter Updates**. Each month I will send out a newsletter outlining updates and information about key happenings and policy discussions happening around me and those that I am directly influencing. These newsletters are quite detailed and require study. I hope you will take advantage of this information and share it with the neighbors in your precinct.
- b. **Quarterly Policy Update Meetings**. Every quarter I hold an in-person policy update and discussion meeting. In this meeting I will share with you legislation that I am personally working on as well as discuss with you key policy issues and public debates that are happening in our state. I hope you will make it a priority to attend these quarterly meetings. See details below.

Between these two communication venues I am committed to ensuring that you always know my opinion and stand on key political issues, and you will always know what legislation I am working on or planning to work on for the next upcoming General Session.

Announcing Our Next Planning Meeting – Saturday May 31 (from 9 am to 12 noon)

In that spirit, please mark your calendars for our first, in-person, Quarterly Policy Planning meeting for 2014. This will be our first in-person meeting I hold in preparation for the 2015 General Session. The agenda for the meeting is outlined below. Please do all you can to come and participate in discussing key policy issues facing Utah as well as a chance to hear and discuss the legislation I completed in the last General Session.

Event Details:

Date: **Saturday, May 31, 2014**

Time: **9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

Place: Daybreak Community Center (4544 Harvest Moon Dr., South Jordan) – **Room B**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Refreshments will be provided. Please **RSVP** so we can plan accordingly.

Proposed Meeting Agenda:

We will be reviewing the following topics in this meeting

- Review key bills I personally sponsored and passed in the 2014 Session
- Review my legislative record and take questions on bills that I supported during the 2014 Session
- Discuss the future of the Caucus System
- Discuss Common Core Issues and SAGE Testing Opt Out Policy
- Discuss proposed 2015 legislation on Public Lands Policy Funding for Education
- Other topics as suggested by meeting participants

Again, I hope to see you there. Please don't forget to RSVP!

FYI – For New Delegates - Here is a List of My Bills That Passed in the 2014 Session

This year I had quite a large legislative load (due to several policy projects I have been researching for several years that finally came together during this session). I discussed all but one of these bills during my quarterly meetings prior to the session. The last bill below (SB 244) was brought to me by Salt Lake County to help them with a requested change to tax policy. Here is a list of key priority bills I passed in the last session. We will discuss these in more detail during our in-person meeting:

1. **SB 39 – Home School Amendments.** This bill removes state requirements on parents who chose to homeschool their children. Parents no longer have to follow state curriculum and school hour requirements. This bill also removes the requirement to annually sign an affidavit of homeschooling (changing to one-time filing). This bill also identifies a new placement process for all students who transfer back into public education full time.
2. **SB 103 - Local Control of Classroom Time.** Under this bill, each school district may now use up to 32 hours or 4 days of school each year for the purpose of teacher professional development or teacher preparation time without impact to a school's funding.
3. **SB 104 - Improvement of Reading Instruction.** Under this bill, we add an additional \$100k of funding for the U of U Reading Clinic (providing teacher professional development and individual student intervention for children and Teachers in K-3). It requires the use technology in assisting with reading remediation.
4. **SB 109 - Radon Testing for Home Purchase.** Under this bill, we funded \$25k for the purpose of an electronic awareness campaign to ensure Utahans are aware of the risks of Radon poisoning in Utah and how to remediate it.
5. **SB 110 - Guardianship Costs for Parents of Disabled Adult Child.** This bill requires the court system to enable the process of Legal Guardianship through an online application without the need for attorney's.
6. **SB 122 - Parent Accountability in Public Education.** Under this bill, parents are giving a "Bill of Rights" as to the areas where they can expect a "reasonable expectation" of accommodation relative to their child's education within public education. 10 rights are expressly outlined.
7. **SB 131 - Student Leadership Grant.** Under this bill, we re-authorize the grant program for schools to build or buy a "student leadership" program for implementation at their local schools. We secured another year of funding for \$250k. The program still requires a match of any funds by the local school district.

8. **SCR 1 - Resolution Recognizing the 60th Anniversary of Including “In God We Trust” in the Pledge.** Under this resolution we officially recognize that it has been 60 years since Congress approved the inclusion of the words “In God We Trust” in the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States.
9. **SB 215 - School Security.** Under this bill (which I worked on with students from Copper Hills High School) we are changed law to allow School leaders to contact students who are off campus for release time when there is a school shut down or other safety issue.
10. **SB 244- Property Tax Amendments.** Under this bill, the county and state can now send you property tax notices via email, as long as you authorize it and keep the email address valid.

My Endorsement of Susan Pulsipher – Candidate for School Board – Jordan School District

I want to take this opportunity to express my **strong support for Susan Pulsipher**. In my opinion, Susan is the best potential candidate for the Jordan School Board in her District. I have worked with Susan on many issues related to Public Education over the last 4 years. I know her very well. I know where her heart is as well as her commitment to ensure the best possible public education for our children according to the values of our conservative community.

Susan genuinely believes in small government and in the importance of her role in holding the District Staff accountable to keep administrative costs low. She has shown great courage in her willingness to directly challenge district staff and to challenge entrenched ways of doing things in our district. She has often stood alone or with the minority of the board in these efforts.

When facing the difficult decision to support taxes to build new schools, Susan was one of just a couple of board members willing to put restrictions on design scope and to put tight controls on the cost of construction. That also took great courage. But the most important aspect of Susan’s leadership is her absolute commitment to getting out and listening to parents face-to-face. She has instituted more town hall meetings and parent engagement efforts than anyone I have worked with on the board. After getting parent feedback, she has also shown her commitment to actually implement that feedback. I trust her completely and encourage all of you to get to know her and to support her in this important election!

A Quick Overview of the 2014 General Legislative Session

During the 2014 session, 784 bills were introduced and 486 bills were passed. Of those passed, 463 were amended at some point prior to their passage. The amending and veto process mean the system is working. Different opinions and views are being heard and considered, flaws are corrected and the bills passed are generally what is best for Utah. Here is a link to all the bills that were passed: <http://le.utah.gov/asp/passedbills/passedbills.asp>.

If you have a question about the status of a particular bill you were following, you can check on it by typing the number into the search bar on the legislative website (<http://le.utah.gov/>) and then click the status bar on the bill's page.

The Governor Vetoed Three bills from the 2014 Session

- SB 257 would have given more parent participation in decisions that related to curriculum content used in schools. The Governor felt that this bill took away the local control over this issue from our School Districts.
- HB 414 would have given the legislature subpoena power when conducting some investigations. The Governor felt that this additional power was too broad and unnecessary and represented potential risk to the protection of citizen rights.

- HB 102 addressed problems that arise when Special Assessment Areas are created. This bill was vetoed because of unintended consequences that were discovered. Here is a link to the letter the Governor sent about vetoing this bill. <http://www.deseretnews.com/media/pdf/1327279.pdf>

At the end of the day, we agreed with the Governor that these bills had problems and choose not to hold a Veto Override Session. Here is a link to an explanation about the process of deciding on this special veto override session by President Niederhauser. <http://www.senatesite.com/home/veto-override-2014/#more-10633>.

A Look at the 2014/15 Approved Budget

Setting the budget for the upcoming year was the most important task of the Legislature. Here is an overview of how the budget was allocated: The overall budget for the 2015 fiscal year will be \$13.5 billion. Of that, 34% went to Social Services, 30% to Public Education and 12% to Higher Education. Our new growth in the economy added \$253 million of new ongoing revenue and there was \$144 Million in one-time surpluses left over from last year's budget. More than half of this new revenue went to education expenditures. Here is a link to some graphs on how the state's budget was divided. <http://le.utah.gov/lfa/LFASums.jsp?month=3&pubid=5816>.

2014 Bills with Biggest Financial Impact

- House Bill 74, Energy Efficient Tax Vehicle Tax Credits: This bill extends tax credits for electric, natural gas, and other alternative fuel vehicles resulting in a \$1.3 million one-time annual revenue loss.
- House Bill 140, Tax Credit Amendments: This bill creates a new tax credit for businesses that employ homeless individuals. It is a pilot program. If businesses choose to use it they could receive up to \$2,000 per year. Estimated revenue loss from this change is estimated at \$100,000 per year.
- Senate Bill 65, Sales and Use Tax Exemption Modifications: Reducing the tax liability of certain manufacturers by \$347,000 when they purchases certain parts or make certain repairs.
- Senate Bill 224, Renewable Energy Tax Credit Amendments: This extends a tax credit for power, heating, and cooling systems that are based on renewable energy. (The credit may forgo an estimated tax liability of about \$637,000 per year beginning in fiscal year 2016.)
- Here is a list of the specific allocations to the General and Education funds: <http://le.utah.gov/interim/2014/pdf/00002757.pdf>.

A Look at Our Population Growth

It is interesting to note that by the time the 2015 budget is spent, Utah's population will reach 3 million residents. We really are growing fast. The 2012-13 Census Bureau reports ranked Utah at the second fastest growing state in the Union. If we continue to grow at our historic average rate, by the time this year's High School seniors are ready to retire, our population will have doubled again to nearly 6 million. This growth rate is a critical factor to consider as we look at long-term planning for things like road and highway, public transportation, education, university planning and even the relocation of the prison.

A Quick Overview of Clean Air Realities and Efforts

As you know, clean air measures received a lot of bipartisan legislative success this past session. It is a problem that will never be entirely solved because of our unique topography and geography, but everyone seems to be willing to do something to help improve the air as much as possible. Adjustments to our personal behaviors on those 15 or so days each winter that we experience an inversion are some of the very best things we can do. Here are some thoughts from Senator Adams about our legislative efforts to help clean the air. <http://www.senatesite.com/home/clean-air/>.

Two bills that have now become law that will help with clean energy and therefore clean air are HB 326 that makes it easier to install solar panels and SB 224 adds solar projects to the list of entities which could get production tax credits. So now these entities will be treated the same as wind and geothermal companies. Here are the links to the bills:

- <http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/HB0326.html>
- <http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/SB0224.html>

Moving Forward – Monthly Interim Meetings and Staying Involved

Beginning on May 21st, the Legislature will begin to hold our monthly Interim Meetings. These meetings are key to our annual preparation for the next General Session. The best way to keep track of our efforts is through one of the many social media avenues the Senate has available. Links to all of them are all available here: <http://senatecloud.com/>.

In addition, as mentioned previously, I will continue to send out my monthly newsletter updates and hold my quarterly meetings.

Do You Know Someone Who Wants to Get These Newsletters and Invitations?

If you know someone who is interested in signing up for my newsletter and getting invitations to my quarterly meetings, please send them this link to sign up:

<http://aaronosmond.us5.list-manage1.com/subscribe/post?u=1ef74e3734f3ce5658954330a&id=9fca6e1123>

Copies of this year's newsletters and legislative updates can also be found on my website at www.aaronosmond.com.

Well that's it for now. I wish you a wonder spring season. I look forward to talking with you in person soon!

Sincerely,

Senator Aaron Osmond
11466 Country Knoll Road
South Jordan, UT 84095
801-897-8127 Cell
aosmond@le.utah.gov
www.aaronosmond.com

SUBSCRIPTION NOTE: If you would prefer not to receive these updates, please let me know and I will remove you from the list.