

Pre General Session Update - Senator Aaron Osmond January 2015

Sunday, January 04, 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I sincerely hope that 2014 was a great year for you and your family! 2015 is now upon us and I am in active preparation for the upcoming 2015 General Legislative Session. In the spirit of preparation, I wanted to focus this month's newsletter on sharing with you my legislative plans.

Pre-Session Planning Meeting – Saturday, January 17 (9am to 11 am)

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming Pre-Session Planning Meeting. During this in-person meeting, Representative Rich Cunningham and I will discuss our upcoming legislative plans and other policy issues facing our district and the citizens of Utah. Again, this meeting is only successful if you participate. Please pass on this information to your neighbors and invite any who will come! We look forward to seeing you there!

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, January 17th, 2015

Time: 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Place: **South Jordan Gale Center** (10300 S. Beckstead Lane, South Jordan)

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

2015 Bill Files for Senator Aaron Osmond

Below is a complete list of all Bill Files that I currently have open with the State Legislature for the 2015 General Legislative Session. I have listed the bills in alphabetical order only. I have not provided any context behind why I am running the bills, just a high level overview of what each bill file actually does:

- 1) **Assessment of Public Lands**. This bill requires the Utah Tax Commission to conduct a valuation study to establish the current market value of all federally controlled lands (except for national parks) and what tax revenue would be generated if those lands were held by private owners. It also requires the Tax Commission to determine what revenue would be generated if those lands were managed by the State of Utah in the same way we manage our School Land Trust lands. The study is to be updated every 5 years with a formal report to the Legislature on the findings.
- 2) **Behavioral Testing and Tracking Restrictions**. This bill removes or restricts any authorization or use of Behavioral Testing on children within the State's public education system (that is not clearly required or authorized under Federal law relative to Special Needs Children).
- 3) **Butterfield Canyon Tunnel Toll Authorization**. This resolution indicates the State's willingness to support/approve a plan to enter into a public-private partnership for the construction and establishment of a toll road or tunnel connecting Herriman and Toole. The partnership would be established between the State, the Federal Government, and various private investment entities (TBD).
- 4) **Board of Education Compensation Amendments**. This bill would authorize the Executive Compensation Committee to review and authorize changes to the compensation for elected members of the State Board of

Education (including the State Superintendent) on the same schedule as other elected and appointed officials reviewed by this same compensation committee.

- 5) **Charter School Authorization Amendments.** This bill would authorize a Municipal Council to be a chartering entity to establish new a Charter School(s) within their city limits. The charter must still be approved by the State Board of Education before it is final.
- 6) **Children with Cancer Special License Plate.** This bill would establish a custom Utah License Plate, that when purchased, the proceeds would be donated to Primary Children’s Hospital for the purpose of child cancer research.
- 7) **Credit Monitoring for Youth.** This bill would enable parents/guardians to request a “Credit Freeze” for any of their own children under the age of 18. The credit of that child would remain frozen until the parent/guardian authorized removal of the freeze, or when the child turns 18.
- 8) **Data Reporting for Front Line Teachers.** This bill would require the State Office of Education to provide an annual public report (by district) clearly showing the number of actual active “front-line teachers” per district and the amount of total compensation being used to pay these teachers (versus the cost of paying administrators or other employees like bus drivers or food personnel).
- 9) **Daylight Savings Time Amendments.** This resolution would indicate Utah’s support of moving permanently to Daylight Savings Time (DST). This means that when we “spring forward” to DST in April, we would no longer “fall back” in November, but stay on the later time permanently. Note: Even if this resolution should pass, to formally go into effect the Federal Department of Transportation would still need to give their authorization/waiver for the State of Utah to transition to this new time schedule.
- 10) **Drop Out Recovery Amendments.** This bill would require school districts to set aside a certain percentage of a Student Weighted Pupil Unit (or the amount of money each school district receives to fund each student) when a student drops out of high school. The money must be used to contract with an approved “Drop Out Recovery” entity to mentor/coach that student back into active school status. If the student does engage in the Drop Out Recovery services and is making active academic progress, that student may remain in the district’s Average Daily Membership and continue to receive funding for that student from the State.
- 11) **Dyslexia Pilot Program.** This bill would establish a grant program for School Districts to fund the implementation of proven interventions for Dyslexia and other reading disorders. It would set aside approximately \$750,000 for the State Office of Education to award grants to school districts with clear and proven intervention plans to identify and assist students with these challenges with the goal of enabling them to eventually mainstream back to their regular programs.
- 12) **GOED Revisions (Committee Bill).** This is a Committee Bill. The bill is a holistic rewrite of the entire section of state code relative to the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. It addresses code inconsistencies, clarifies legislative intent, and provides more policy guidance relative to the authority of GOED to administer economic incentives to attract businesses to the state of Utah.
- 13) **Intergenerational Poverty Amendments.** This bill is still in idea stage with the Intergenerational Poverty Commission. The goal of the bill is to enable/fund specific educational opportunities or educational choices for children within intergenerational poverty families no matter where they live in the State. As more details are lock-down I will share them publicly.
- 14) **Juvenile Offender Amendments.** This bill would require attorneys representing juveniles to complete training on all State statutes and policies related to Juvenile prosecution. It would also restrict prosecutors from using the Serious Youth Offender Law to send Juveniles directly to Adult Court on the first offense (except in the case of murder or attempted murder). It would also require the Adult Penal System to house Juveniles under the age

of 21 in Juvenile Justice Facilities (rather than in State Prison) except in the case of murder or attempted murder. Finally, it articulates and clarifies certain rights of parents and the youth when a child is being accused and held for crime.

- 15) **National Board Certification Scholarships for Teachers.** This bill funds \$10,000,000 for the purpose of enabling Utah teachers to apply for a Loan-to-Grant program that would pay for the cost of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (including the certification fee of \$2,500 and the cost of up to 4 professional development days to prepare for the certification exam). If the teacher successfully completes the certification within 3 years, they will not have to pay back the cost. If they fail to complete, they must pay the State back for the cost of the certification over a 5 year period. The bill would fund up to 3,000 teachers in Utah to obtain this certification. Today there are only 250 National Board Certified Teachers in Utah (out of a total of nearly 26,000 teachers).
- 16) **Parent Rights Amendments.** This bill would amend last year's Parent's Rights Bill to say that a school must "reasonably accommodate" a Parent's request to excuse their child for any family event or a visit to a health-care provider without the need of doctor's note or other approval, as long as: 1) The parent must give a written notice to the school at least 1 week prior to the absence, and 2) the child is meeting expectations of academic performance in their classes. Part 1 above is the change for this year's law (to allow time for the school to assess the child's academic performance as part of the accommodation request).
- 17) **Property Tax Equalization Amendments (Equalization Bill).** This bill would adjust the State's Minimum Basic Property Tax Rate to recapture the loss of buying power due to inflation (the rate has not been changed since 1996). An inflationary adjustment would generate approximately \$74,000,000 in new revenue. The bill would capture this adjustment over a 5 year period. Under this bill, this new money would be earmarked to fund only the Capital Outlay Foundation and Capital Outlay Enrollment Growth programs. These programs already exist in State statute and were established to address property tax equalization for Capital purposes. This would enable the State to fund districts struggling with high property tax rates but still generate less than the State average in local property tax revenue per student to fund capital projects or needs in their district.
- 18) **Public School Early Graduation Amendments.** This bill would double the size of the Centennial Scholarship (from \$1,000 to \$2,000) for those students who graduate from high school early. It would also require that schools formally notify students/parents about the scholarship and provide clear data/schedules that show them how their students can graduate early.
- 19) **Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Works of Art.** This bill would simply eliminate State sales tax on the original sale of any original work of art in the state of Utah.
- 20) **School Accountability Amendments.** This bill would authorize the State Board of Education to convert a consistently "Failing School" into a State-operated Charter School. The State Board of Education would authorize the charter, select the management team, and be directly responsible for the academic results each year. The intervention process would begin only after a school has been failing for 3 consecutive years, and would formally transition to a State charter school after the 5 year of failing status.
- 21) **School Performance Reporting Amendments.** This bill is a place holder for potential changes to our school grading model. I am still working with the State Board of Education and the Superintendent's office relative to some potential changes. As more details become final I will share with my constituents.
- 22) **State Board of Education Rulemaking – Federal Nutrition Standard Exemptions.** This bill would re-authorize school districts to conduct "food-based" fund raisers for extra-curricular groups or organizations. This bill is enabling an exemption under Federal Law that allows the State Office of Education to allow certain exemptions to Nutrition Based Restrictions on food items sold at schools when sold for fundraisers.

- 23) **State Domestic Animal.** This bill would establish the Golden Retriever as the Official Domestic Animal for the State of Utah. Note: This bill was suggested and is being sponsored by a class of elementary students at Daybreak Elementary in our district!
- 24) **Student Leadership Skills Grant.** This bill establishes \$750,000 of on-going funding for grants to schools that would like to develop “Leadership Skills” that influence the behavioral and academic environment of their schools. The bill also clarifies operating and reporting requirements to ensure appropriate schools are selected for the grant and that such grants are driving academic outcomes over time.
- 25) **Sunset Reauthorization – Workforce Services (Committee Bill).** This is a Committee Bill. This bill re-authorizes the statutory existence and function of the Workforce Services Division of the State of Utah. If we do not complete this re-authorization, the entire department would be required to be shut down by State law.
- 26) **USTAR Governance Amendments.** This bill would enable the Governor of the State of Utah to fire the Executive Director of Utah Science Technology and Research initiative (USTAR) for non-performance if he feels that such an action is justified. Today, the Governor has power to appoint a person to this role but has no power to fire this person if needed.
- 27) **Voted Leeway Guarantee Program Amendments (Equalization Bill).** This bill would earmark the first 30% of any annual increase to the State Income Tax Revenues for the purpose of funding the Voted Leeway Guarantee Program. This program was established to fund local property tax equalization of school districts over time in Utah. It guarantees districts that prove a minimum taxing effort will not generate less than a certain amount of operating revenue per student. The problem is that the State has not fully funded the program. This earmark would ensure consistent funding of this equalization program each year.

Well, that is a full summary of all my bills. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at my contact information below.

I am truly honored to represent you and I sincerely desire to have your feedback and perspective on the work I am doing on your behalf.

Sincerely,

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

Senator Osmond’s Legislative Coordinator
Ian Robertson
801-888-8742 My Senate Cell Phone
irobertsonslc@gmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION NOTE:

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