

Monthly Legislative Update from Senator Aaron Osmond July and August 2015

August 9, 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Over the last 30 days my family has had cause to celebrate and count the many blessings of living in this wonderful country and in the great state of Utah! Specifically, we welcomed home two of our children returning from service as missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (one from Honduras and the other from DC)!

Both children, upon their return, expressed their joy at coming home to Utah: The beauty of our mountain landscapes, the strong sense of community and family, our economic prosperity, and most importantly, our societal commitment to God and Country. Both children expressed how wonderful it is to live in a place that values freedom and commitment to values. As we celebrated Independence Day and the Pioneer Day, our family truly felt blessed to live here in Utah, surround by family, friends, and fellow citizens, no matter what our backgrounds may be!

Thank you again for this great opportunity to serve you as your State Senator. Apart from the celebrations, this last month it has been busy as we as a Legislature meet and discuss various policies, legislation, and other proposals for the upcoming session. Below you will find those details.

I hope you enjoy this update!

Salt Lake Tribune Article on Teacher Compensation

Last Sunday I posted an article in the Salt Lake Tribune about the challenges our state is facing in recruiting, hiring, and retain great teachers in our state. In this article I also proposed a state income tax exemption for teachers as a method to increase teacher compensation and to improve our competitive recruiting to attract teachers to our state. I have received a lot of feedback from parents, teachers, and colleagues about this article. I welcome your thoughts and feedback on this topic as well. Here is a link to the article below. Please send me your feedback via email as soon as you can:

<http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2786369-155/op-ed-give-utah-teachers-a-tax>

Website Changes

Over the next month, I will be making changes to my legislative website. Although the layout will largely stay the same the content will be significantly updated. I welcome your comments and suggestions for improvements as we update the site. You can find my website at www.Aaronosmond.com.

July Interim Meeting Update and Review

Our interim meetings are always held on the third Wednesday of each month. On those days, I head to the State Capitol to take part in my assigned committee meetings and to participate in confirming various appointments made by the Governor on the Senate floor.

You can find all upcoming meetings at www.le.utah.gov, and follow our meetings through a number of social media sites listed on www.SenateCloud.com.

Here is a quick summary of some of the key committee meetings I participated in during the last month:

Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee

The committee discussed changes and new requirements to USTAR identified in SB62 from the 2014 General Session as well as identified in two audits. An independent third party review resulted in additional recommendations for changes to the program. These changes will enable USTAR to better fulfill its vision to create “a technology ecosystem that will enable ideas to seed, grow, and thrive”.

Ivy Estabrooke, Executive Director of USTAR outlined work that USTAR as an organization has done to comply with requirements from SB62, which focused on process changes to increase transparency and accountability. This includes the creation of subcommittees to review the budgeting processes in the organization as well as the progress of commercialization of technologies coming out of the state’s research universities.

Val Hale, Executive Director of GOED, presented to the committee, speaking specifically about workforce recruitment and training. Mr. Hale talked about the fact that Utah consistently ranks at the top of many lists, ranking as one of the best and most vibrant economies in the nation. Most recently, CNBC again ranked Utah #3 in its list of America’s Top States for Business. He said that workforce recruitment is key to maintaining Utah’s competitive advantage.

Ben Hart with GOED stated that there are 3 areas of emphasis for workforce recruiting, Pipeline Development, Attraction or Talent Recruitment, and Soft Skills.

Within those three areas of emphasis GOED has 9 specific initiatives, two of which were highlighted:

- Global Branding Campaign – This campaign has a focus in IT. It was funded by a one-time appropriation of \$675,000 which is a small budget compared to other states. As part of the campaign there is a [website](#) and [video](#).
- Utah Aerospace Manufacturing Pathways - GOED has also partnered with Utah aerospace employers, school districts, and various other stakeholders to create a pilot program called the Utah Aerospace Manufacturing Pathways. This is a program to provide high school students with education and training that will allow them to finish high school with education, experience, and a manufacturing certificate in enhanced composites training that will allow them to be employed with one of Utah’s aerospace manufacturers. The objective of the pilot program will be to have a minimum of 40 students graduate with a manufacturing certificate by June of 2016.

To listen to the full meeting, please click [here](#).

Education Interim Committee

The committee discussed the effectiveness of early childhood intervention school readiness programs in Utah. Staff provided evidence that student performance in math and reading on national tests is below target in some areas. The committee then considered possible programs and methods to improve our child readiness efforts and explored some of the successful practices in Colorado including high quality preschool, full day kindergarten, and focused literacy efforts.

Prison Relocation Commission

While I don't serve on this commission, I have received quite a few emails and calls in regards to the prison relocation. To answer some questions that I may have missed in my last letter I decided to provide an update on the Relocation Commissions meetings over the past few weeks:

The Prison Relocation Commission made some significant progress this month in regards to information (now available to the public as well as legislators) related to each of the potential sites for the prison move.

The Commission received a report from the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst regarding differences in the cost of operating a correctional facility on each of the four sites under the commission's consideration as the location for a relocated state correctional facility.

Commission consultants offered reports on issues surrounding reconstructing the prison at its current location in Draper, and on the technical evaluation of the four relocation sites.

Because of the amount of new information presented and the commissioners' desire to do due diligence in evaluating the new information, a motion was made and accepted that extended the August 1st deadline for choosing and reporting on a new site for the prison.

The new deadline is October 1st, 2015 - but many on the commission have voiced their belief that the decision might be made much earlier.

Please remember that all of the information from the beginning of this process until now is available for your review at le.utah.gov/prc. You can also send an email with thoughts and suggestions to prisonrelocation@le.utah.gov, and our legislative staff will receive and review it.

Some other updates that might interest you that occurred particularly in regards to our monthly interim meeting were: The Senate met in an official Advice and Consent session to confirm Governor Herbert's appointments to various government offices throughout the last month.

Those appointments:

- Governor Herbert appointed as a judge to the 3rd District Juvenile Court Elizabeth Knight. The Senate Judicial Confirmation Committee met on July 7th and reported a favorable recommendation for confirmation. The Senate unanimously confirmed the appointment.
- Governor Herbert appointed Stan Lockhart as a member of the Utah State Board of Education (Stan is the husband of the late Rebecca Lockhart – former Speaker of the Utah House of Representatives). The Senate Education Confirmation Committee met on July 14th and reported a favorable recommendation for confirmation.

- Governor Herbert appointed Amanda Smith and Neal Berube as members of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission both of whom were favorably recommended by the Business and Labor Confirmation Committee on June 29th.

To check out our blog post with complete confirmation info, you can click [here](#).
To access video of these same proceedings, you can click [here](#).

Thanks for following me along in my legislative journey. I hope to continually keep you informed about my work on the Hill – likewise, please keep in touch – I’d love to hear your insights and opinions.

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Contacting me: I can be reached by email at aosmond@le.utah.gov or by phone at (801) 888-8742. You’re also welcome to join me at the capitol any time. Our next interim day is **Wednesday, August 19th**. I’d love to see you there or answer any questions that you might have via phone or email.

If you’d like to meet with me in person outside of interim or the legislative session, you can reach Ian Robertson, my Legislative Coordinator at irobertsonslc@gmail.com or 801-888-8742. He’ll help us get in touch, set up a meeting or answer any question you might have.

Once again I am honored to serve and share these experiences with you. I hope that while we continue on this journey that we can continue to learn and grow together. As the session rapidly approaches I hope to hear from you and continue to update you about legislation that may affect you. Once again thank you!

Until next month!

Sincerely,

Aaron

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

Legislative Coordinator
Ian Robertson
Cell Phone: 801-888-8742 –or- 801-819-1037
[Email: irobertsonslc@gmail.com](mailto:irobertsonslc@gmail.com)

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