

Legislative candidate forum

Questions



1. What do you believe should be done as Utah continues to respond to COVID-19? What mitigation efforts do you support for local enforcement?

2. What do you identify as key elements to pandemic-related economic recovery?

3. Although overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, sales tax was a hot-button issue in the state earlier this year. How do you believe this issue should be addressed moving forward?

Utah Senate District 25



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Infections have risen as we move indoors, schools and universities opened, and people felt safer. Public officials — mayors, councils, the Governor — must assess appropriate measures and give clear, sound information. We know that social distancing, wearing masks, and hand-washing work; improved testing and contact tracing work. Every Utahn has the responsibility to contribute until we have a vaccine. We also can support local nonprofits that provide important community services.

First, limit the spread of the virus using distancing, masks, and hygiene. Continued increases may result in going back to more restrictions that will hurt the economy even more. We can patronize local and state businesses, safely, as much as possible. Additional federal and state relief measures may be necessary in the short term until a vaccine is available.

We need clear and simple public discussion of Utah's budget and budget priorities. If specific services are to be newly taxed, those taxes must be broadly applied, not only levied on services provided by businesses that are not well-represented by legislators or lobbyists. In addition, we should not approve Amendment G, which would change the Education Fund allocations.



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It's difficult, but critical, to find the balance between safeguarding public health, securing the economy and protecting liberties. We can accomplish this through educating without fear and trusting people to do the right thing. Local leaders are best equipped to understand the needs and values of their communities and how to ensure mitigation efforts will strike the correct balance. I support individual responsibility and concern and respect for one another.

We need to reallocate remaining CARES Act money to industries still struggling to get their employees back to work. Training programs should be expanded and made more accessible to redirect those who are unemployed into viable industries. And we need to ensure the state maintains business-friendly policies — low taxes and regulations — that will attract companies seeking relocation and bringing higher paying jobs.

There are many economic sectors that experienced major increases in their recent sales tax revenue. Cache County experienced record increases. Sales tax is not going to be an issue in the near future. As your senator, I will never support an increased tax on food or gas and will be vigilant in ensuring accountability and fiscally conservative legislation.

Utah House District 3



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Medicine and science tell us that social distancing, mask wearing, limiting the size of gatherings, and good availability of testing with rapid turnaround of test results are critically important. We could reduce the new infection numbers greatly if state, county, and local leaders spoke out more persuasively and urgently about the need to implement these basic measures. Many seem to ignore or want to wish away the facts of the virus.

Some have fallen for the mistaken belief that the pandemic requires that we choose between getting the economy back on its feet and protecting people's health. This is a false choice. Other countries and states have shown that it is through effectively suppressing the spread of the virus that we most quickly get the economy up and running well again. Protecting people's health and welfare is the thing that allows our economy to bounce back quickly and in a more long lasting and effective way.

I am against the tax reform bill that was proposed. The food tax alone is reason to be against it. We can address tax reform without shifting the burden on low- and middle-income people as that reform bill unfortunately did. Also, the people and their input were ignored which, unfortunately, seems to be a re-occurring theme in the Utah legislature.



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We have three branches of government. Each has a role that the other cannot assume. The legislative branch is responsible for creating laws, the executive to execute the laws and the judiciary to interpret the laws. Executives who create mandates circumvent and even undermine the constitution. In this day of technology, the legislative branch can certainly create laws they deem necessary. Short of new legislation, leaders should teach correct principles and let citizens govern themselves.

The key to economic recovery is removing impediments to business. The past months have taught us who is at risk for acquiring and dying from COVID-19. The people of Cache Valley and the state will take whatever actions are necessary to help the high risk population avoid the virus while allowing the remaining population to live life and grow the economy.

While we wait to see how state finances fare during the COVID-19 pandemic, the state should do the following: 1) freeze taxes and budgets for the next 12 months and 2) implement zero-based budgeting so that each department is held to account for their upcoming budgets. I would like to see the state leave income taxes with public education.

Utah House District 4



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The number of Covid cases are dangerously high. Utahns must come together and take care of each other by consistently wearing masks, hand hygiene and maintaining distance. Cooperation with health department tracers for testing and staying home when exposed or ill. Tele-work if possible. Limit gatherings, including holiday parties (i.e. Halloween). Yes, we are tired. But the danger to the community is overwhelming the hospitals. With no vaccine, our behaviour is the only mitigation.

As long as it is unsafe to gather together, the economy will suffer. We must contain this viral outbreak. Employees and students need to be able to work from home as much as possible. Government can assure that high speed internet becomes available to all households, just like other utilities. Subsidized broadband would boost the economy.

I will not support regressive tax proposals that hit the working poor, such as a tax on food. For many, there was food insecurity before the pandemic, while the economy was booming. We should examine loopholes that allow corporations and millionaires to pay less tax than regular citizens. We must block any attempt to take money from education.



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Well, I am glad that ideas around local control is the action taken. I still believe that mitigation must be social distancing, mask wearing in close quarters, and sanitization. Moreover, we must be careful about large group gatherings if we see a surge in cases.

Our citizens need to get back to work and students need to be in school. We have seen this can be done with adherence to safety protocols. I believe in targeted approaches to handling a pandemic. Those who are less vulnerable should be encouraged to work so that businesses can function, and employees can take care of themselves and their families.

When individuals get back to work, they have the capacity to make purchases and thus provide sales tax revenue. I believe in having a balanced budget. Lower sales tax, property tax, and income tax will lead to more jobs, increased spending, and a more dynamic economy. I do not support increased sales tax on food.

Utah House District 5



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1. Physical Distancing
2. Testing
3. Contact Tracing
4. Non-optional masks
Utah is on the brink of an emergency state once again as our numbers rise. Local governments are frequently the best at determining the risks and needs of their communities but must be empowered to make those decisions. We must continue rigorous oversight and testing in our densest communities: schools, universities, businesses, etc.

Economic relief by financial institutions to those unemployed and those still feeling the effects of unemployment: debt relief, rent relief, credit protection, etc. A business recovery plan with similar features plus a non-liquidating receivership model as needed. A long term plan to buttress the tourism industry, critical to UT's overall economic health.

Moving forward, more consideration needs to be given to elements of the proposals from Senator Karen Mayne and Mr. Gary Cornia. Taxes are rarely actually cut; the state cannot afford to lose the overall revenue. The burden is merely shifted from one segment of the population to another. Shifting that burden to the working class is not the answer.



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I believe we need to strengthen local input on how we respond to this or any other disease. Recent orders from the governor and state health department have set thresholds, but I still believe they don't give sufficient deference to local counties. In the long run I believe we need to rely less on the state health department, and give more deference to the Bear River Health Department. I also believe we need to allow greater county elected official oversight on whatever decisions are made.

True recovery won't come until people feel safe to resume normal life and normal activities. That said I believe it is our role as elected officials to balance the demands of individual liberty, community health, and economic prosperity.

Despite the COVID related economic setbacks, I believe the compromise struck between the legislature and the education community through Amendment G will provide a fix to our budget for the next 10 to 20 years.