

Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee

February 27th, 2025

Bill: SB 288 – Employment Investigation Records Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Stephanie Pitcher

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill amends provisions relating to certain employment records of alleged misconduct.

Discussion: The Bill was not heard.

Yeas:

Nays:

N/V:

Outcome: SB 288 was not heard in the Committee.

Bill: SB 322 – Municipality Annexation and Incorporation Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Calvin R. Musselman

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill modifies provisions related to municipal annexation and incorporation.

Discussion: The sponsor acknowledged the Bill's complexity and stated his intention to refine its provisions during the interim. He explained that, for decades, municipalities have annexed land, and unincorporated areas have incorporated, primarily to manage growth. In some cases, annexation has also been used as a tool to limit development. He highlighted the potential impact of zoning changes on property values and raised the question of whether property owners should be compensated if annexation leads to a decrease in their property value.

The Bill includes safeguards to prevent individuals from advocating for upzoning solely for financial gain. The sponsor noted that a similar approach has been implemented in Arizona and that this Bill is modeled after that framework. Anticipating the need for significant revisions, he requested that the Bill be sent to interim study.

Senators Blouin and Winterton supported reviewing the Bill during the interim, agreeing that, while it needed further development, it had potential. The Utah League of Cities and Towns raised concerns but expressed a willingness to collaborate with the sponsor on refining the proposal. No further discussion followed.

Yeas:

Nays:
N/V:

Outcome: The sponsor requested that SB 322 to be sent to interim for further study.

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 37 – Utah Housing Amendments

Sponsor: Representative James A. Dunnigan

Floor Sponsor: Senator Lincoln Fillmore

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill deals with housing development and housing policy.

Discussion: Representative Dunnigan presented the 2nd substitute of the Bill, which was adopted by the Committee. He explained that the Bill allows a special district to operate a propane system and lowers the minimum population requirement for town incorporation from 100 to 75 residents. He emphasized that the Bill aims to encourage affordable homeownership by providing incentives for cities.

Cameron Diehl, Director of the Utah League of Cities and Towns, spoke in support of the Bill, noting that it aligns with recommendations from a state housing audit. One key recommendation was to amend the purpose of the Land Use Development and Management Act to include language supporting affordable housing. Another was to create a statewide strategic plan for affordable housing, which the Bill addresses by requiring the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget to work with the Legislature, local governments, the homebuilding industry, and other stakeholders to develop the plan, as outlined starting on line 1716.

Mr. Diehl highlighted key components of the plan, including fostering collaboration, prioritizing data-driven decision-making, and implementing moderate-income housing strategies. He also emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in promoting affordable homeownership. Steve Waldrip, the Housing Advisor for the Governor's Office and a representative of the Utah Association of Realtors, also expressed support for the Bill.

Yeas: 4
Nays: 0
N/V: 3

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 37 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute HB 292 – Political Signs Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Jordan D. Teuscher

Floor Sponsor: Senator Evan J. Vickers

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill amends provisions related to political signs.

Discussion: Senator Teuscher highlighted that during the last election cycle, political signs were frequently defaced in creative ways, often by altering their messages. To address this, the Bill establishes regulations for political signage, including reducing the size exemption for disclosure requirements, prohibiting signs from being attached to utility poles, light poles, electric utility boxes, or road signs, and banning actions that block or modify political messages. He noted that the Bill allows anyone, not just law enforcement, to remove or address violations, as clarified on line 131.

Senator Thatcher inquired whether the primary issue was the lack of a clearly defined criminal penalty for defacing political signs. The sponsor explained that law enforcement had been reluctant to act to remove defaced political signs due to ambiguities in the existing Code. One member of the public expressed opposition to the Bill, raising concerns about potential costs. The sponsor clarified that the Bill carries no fiscal impact. No further discussion followed.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 292 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.