

President J. Stuart Adams
2025 General Session Opening Day Speech

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 General Session.

Welcome the newest members of our Senate: Senators Brammer, Musselman and Stratton. All three of you bring great experience and we are excited you are now with us in the Senate. Can all three of you stand so we can welcome you.

To everyone else. Thank you for coming back. Thank you for your service to the people of Utah and thank you for your friendship, dedication and commitment.

Today, I want to share with you a common vision that drives each one of us. This vision is what I like to call *The Utah Dream*.

The Utah Dream is rooted in values we all hold dear, like hard work, community, family, innovation and opportunity. Where every child, family and community has a chance to grow to achieve and to prosper using principles of personal freedom, responsibility and the collective good. There are some who would like to alter or destroy this Utah Dream. We cannot let that happen.

A few moments ago, united, we stood, we faced our nation's flag and together, we said the Pledge of Allegiance aloud. These 31 words remind us of who we are, what the United States stands for and what it means to us, both as a nation and as individuals. There is one key phrase that we cannot overlook, "And to the *Republic*, for which it stands!"

Our founding fathers created a Republic! We were born here in America, in Utah, to live in a Republic!

This year, our Senate coin honors a legacy that has shaped the very fabric of our nation. Each of you has a coin on your desk; it contains these words: "A Republic if you can keep it."

These words, spoken by Benjamin Franklin at the close of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, serve as a powerful reminder of the responsibility we all share, every citizen shares, in protecting our republic. They reflect the vigilance, care and commitment required to sustain the Utah Dream, the freedoms and values we hold dear.

In Utah, we elect people living in Utah to govern – of the people of Utah – by the people of Utah – and for the people of Utah. That founding vision echoes through this chamber. We are all elected. Our nation's founders built a republic where elected individuals govern. Our founders rebelled against being governed by those appointed, like King George.

Thomas Jefferson understood the inherent dangers of a pure democracy. He warned, "A republic is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind." In other words, our government is not a grantor of rights, it is a guarantor of them.

Alexander Hamilton said, “It has been observed that a pure democracy, if it were practicable, would be the most perfect government. Experience has proved that no position is more false than this. The ancient democracies in which the people themselves deliberated... never possessed one good feature of government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity.”

John Adams declared, “Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts...itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide.”

And even Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme Court. The principal founder of the United States system of constitutional law. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court stated, “Between a balanced republic and a democracy, the difference is like that between order and chaos.”

In the document we all hold so dear, our United States Constitution – each of you has a copy on your desk, you can turn to page 15 at the top of Article 4, Section 4. I have highlighted it for you. We have all pledged to “support, obey and defend” it. Our Constitution says, “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican form of government.

Very much like Benjamin Franklin when he was asked after the constitutional convention what they had done. He said we have formed a republic “if we can keep it.” I pledge to you that I will support, obey and defend our constitution, our republic and I will do everything I can to keep it.

We cannot let unelected special interest groups outside of Utah run initiatives and override our republic, destroy our businesses, demean, impugn and cast aside those who are duly elected to represent their neighbors and friends in Utah.

We cannot let the Utah Dream die. We will not let initiatives driven by out-of-state money turn Utah into California.

Energy

We stand at a pivotal moment in Utah’s future. We need more energy. We need to at least triple our energy production by 2050.

This is not just about meeting demand – it’s about leading the way with innovation and responsibility, securing the energy resources that will power the future of our state and nation.

We all know that we are in an arms race to control artificial intelligence. The country that controls AI will, in turn, control the world. Both economically, with the delivery of high-tech goods and services, and militarily with high-tech weapons systems, both offensively and defensively.

The global arms race for AI technology is already well underway. Other countries are not waiting, the race has begun. The nation that masters AI will hold and control the keys to global economic prosperity, military strength and the power to preserve peace.

AI needs data centers. Data centers need power – continuous and baseload power. There is very little, if any, excess power in America or in Utah. We need more energy production. Energy production is a national security issue.

To keep the Utah dream alive, Utahns must once again lead the way.

We need to establish Utah as the next frontier of energy innovation for not only the nation but the world – a center of excellence that will position our state as a global leader in reliable, affordable power.

Utah needs to be positioned as the nation's nuclear hub, not only in power production but also in key areas of the supply chain – including mining, manufacturing and workforce development.

Nuclear power plants need to be built, constructed and maintained quickly in and outside of Utah by Utahns.

Our universities are in the process of realigning their curriculum to produce more:

- Nuclear engineers
- Nuclear technicians
- and a nuclear power plant construction workforce

The federal government needs to streamline the permitting of small nuclear reactors.

Micro-nuclear reactors can be constructed in a factory and transported on a truck. They can be dropped in place and daisy chained together. For example, if 10 of them are connected, eight could be used and the other two could be held for maintenance or backup.

Utah needs to be the first to have micro-nuclear reactors.

We need to welcome companies to Utah that are focused on nuclear energy production and other companies that will help us accomplish our goal of energy innovation like:

Fervo Energy, which is developing a groundbreaking geothermal project in Beaver County, is set to become the largest next-generation geothermal energy facility in the nation. With an initial capacity of 400 megawatts, it aims to deliver clean and reliable energy, with the potential to expand to 2 gigawatts.

We cannot give up our existing baseload power plants like our existing coal plants. Since 1970, coal power plants have reduced sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide and particulate matter by 84% per kilowatt hour. We want to continue investing in technologies to make coal production cleaner.

Utah consistently ranks among the states with the lowest natural gas prices in the United States. Enbridge just lowered its prices again and has committed to helping power data centers. Natural gas must be a major part of the solution.

rPlus Energies, a Utah-based clean energy company, is significantly expanding the Green River Energy Center in Emery County by quadrupling the amount of lithium battery storage at the site.

All of this needs to be done without placing any financial burden on Utah taxpayers or ratepayers.

We must continue to have the lowest energy prices in the nation. Together, we can ensure that Utah remains a beacon of energy innovation and a model for sustainable growth.

Our commitment to a robust energy future will empower communities and strengthen our economy to ensure reliable and affordable energy resources for generations to come.

Let's continue to have the foresight to do what Utah does best – lead the way toward a brighter, more secure energy future for Utah, the nation and the world.

Critical Minerals

The world today faces a troubling reality. One country controls 60% of global mineral extraction and a staggering 90% of the refinement capacity for critical minerals.

Recently, they banned exports to the United States of three essential critical minerals – key components in military defense, technology systems and electric vehicles.

But there is hope. Right here in Utah, we have 40 of the 50 critical minerals needed in the world. Utah holds a key to strengthening our nation's national security and economic stability.

We must also lead the way with critical mineral extraction and manufacturing. This is our moment to shape the future. Utah is the hope of America, we are the key to securing our future, our freedoms and our security.

We all know securing our future includes securing water.

Multi-State Effort

Water availability and the Great Salt Lake continues to be a concern. Our new water agent and others have been working hard with other states.

San Diego County Water Authority board member recently said when asked about our idea of trading desalinated seawater for Colorado River Water, "Why Not? ... We have the Pacific Ocean."

In a conversation with the Governor of Alaska, he confirmed that in 1991 there was a plan to build a water pipeline from Alaska, Prince Rupert Sound area, to the lower 48.

The Legislative leaders in Wyoming, Idaho, South and North Dakota and Montana want to join with Utah to work on water, energy and other key policy issues.

The University of Utah is working with and creating partnerships for innovation with the University of Idaho and Wyoming.

This is an exciting time to work with our neighbors to solve some of the most critical issues facing Utah and our nation.

We will always do more together than we will apart.

Affordability – Fiscally Sound Tax Cut

Just as those before us secured for us a prosperous future, we must do the same for future generations.

This means strengthening the Utah Dream and the American Dream, which have always been centered around families being able to afford and secure, prosperous lives.

Reducing tax burdens helps Utah families keep more of what they have earned, enables them to stretch and strengthen their budgets and fortifies our economy today and for many, many more tomorrows.

Year after year, we've delivered tax cuts. And this year, we're set to reduce the income tax for the fifth consecutive time!

We are ready to do it, again and again and again and again and again!

And this year, we can cut taxes again! These cuts are about making sure that every family can access the security and opportunities that lie at the heart of the Utah Dream.

Together, we are building a future where families can do more than just live or survive; they can thrive.

Education

And that future starts with education.

The success of our students and educators is the foundation of Utah's prosperity and essential to making the Utah Dream a reality for all.

Utah is setting the standard for educational excellence by investing in students, supporting teachers and preparing our workforce for the future, and the results speak for themselves.

Utah ranks

- Number two in the nation for overall educational achievement
- Number one and number two in the nation – Weber State University and Utah Valley University – for concurrent enrollment
- Best return on investment
- Number one ACT scores
- Fourth in reading scores for eighth graders

- Third in math scores for eighth graders
- Third in overall child well-being

But it doesn't stop there.

Utah is paving the way for students of all ages, from strong early education foundations to real-world opportunities and career readiness, by establishing:

- Early education solutions, like Upstart, across the state ensure a strong foundation from the start.
- Targeted programs to improve 3rd-grade literacy, setting the stage for long-term academic success.
- Apprenticeships with top companies, like Stadler Rail, provide high school students with direct career paths.
- Paid student teaching opportunities, allowing teacher aids to earn a college degree while gaining valuable experience.
- Catalyst Center, a technical high school offering hands-on training for high-demand careers, bridging the gap between college and the workforce.
- And the list goes on and on.

We're committed to continuing to improve and identify areas in education that need our support.

As we continue to invest in education and shape the future, we also look forward to another incredible opportunity on the horizon.

Looking Forward

Utah will once again welcome the world in 2034. We will again put on the best Olympic Games ever.

It's a chance to show the world what we already know – that Utah is not only a remarkable place to visit but a place where dreams come alive.

Imagine a future... an Olympic future...where transportation isn't just faster—it's breathtaking...where air taxis deliver athletes and spectators to Olympic events.

Now, imagine a spaceport in Utah. Utah is uniquely positioned for this bold leap and is primed to reach new heights. The sky is no longer the limit—the stars are. Once again, Utah is ready to lead.

Our future is so bright.

And the Utah Dream is alive and well.

I have a reputation, and I will not disappoint you this year.

On your desks is a card with our priorities on one side, but on the other is a list of how Utah ranks. I think this year's list is the longest ever.

Utah is ranked

- Number one state overall – 2 years in a row
- Number one for economic outlook – 17 years running
- Number one for social mobility
- Number one for starting a business
- Number one for manufacturing job growth
- Best state to move to
- Best job environment
- Home to the nation's hottest job market
- Second best for education
- Most independent
- Most affordable
- Highest volunteer rate
- Best GDP growth of 2024
- Highest rate of unicorns in the United States, with one in 61 venture-backed companies becoming a unicorn. This is almost 70% higher than the national average (2022).

These are amazing Utah Dreams that have come true.

We know America is the hope of the world. I believe Utah, the Utah Dream and our republic, is the hope of America, and thus, we are the hope of the world.

Thank you!