

2021



# POLICY HIGHLIGHTS



When I look back on this past year, I am filled with a range of emotions. There is no doubt that 2020 was by far one of the most challenging years we've faced in my lifetime; and I, like many others, had high hopes for 2021. This year, the tireless efforts of medical innovators and scientists brought us effective vaccines for COVID-19, which has saved countless lives in our country, and across the world. Many of us were finally able to spend time with our loved ones and start to resume some of our normal activities.

In Washington, Democrats took control of Congress and the White House. Despite their efforts to push bad policies that would add to our debt and raise taxes, most Senate action this year focused on bipartisan efforts to address some of our long-term challenges. As Democrats pushed a massive multi-trillion dollar package of spending and tax hikes—euphemistically called “Build Back Better”—I started working with a small, bipartisan group of my Senate colleagues on a bipartisan infrastructure bill. While often conflated, these are two drastically different bills. BBB, a bill to create new and expand existing social programs, appears to be no longer after facing bipartisan opposition. On the other hand, our bipartisan infrastructure bill, which will deliver long-awaited upgrades to our nation's physical infrastructure, received 19 Republican votes in the Senate and became law this fall.

While Democrats' BBB legislation called for increased benefits to illegal immigrants, huge tax breaks to blue state millionaires, federal government provided pre-k, and components of the Green New Deal, our bipartisan infrastructure bill provided an historic investment in roads, highways, bridges, power grids, and broadband throughout the country. Importantly, the bipartisan bill will help Utah mitigate wildfires and drought, and accommodate challenges brought on by our state's rapid growth. The bill also secures funding I fought for to bring running water to Utah Navajos. I could not be more proud to have been a part of this collaborative process which will help communities throughout the country.

This year, Congress ramped up efforts to bring awareness to the rising threat China poses to the global order. I'm pleased that my amendment requiring a grand strategy to address the new era of competition with China was included in this year's defense bill, which is now law. To shine a light on the grave human rights abuses being carried out by the Chinese Communist Party—including the genocide of the Uyghur people—I called for the U.S. to enact a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games. The Administration recently announced the diplomatic boycott as official U.S. policy, and several other free nations, including Great Britain, Canada, Japan, and Australia, have followed suit. Additionally, our bill to prevent goods made with Uyghur slave labor from being sold in the U.S. became law.

I also kept up the fight for other Utah priorities, including securing funding for rural programs, bolstering the role of Hill Air Force Base in our national security, and working to return more local control to our state's public lands. I met with Utahns from around our state to learn more about challenges they were facing and what my team and I might be able to do to help. Additionally, our outreach and constituent services team provided help to thousands of Utahns seeking federal assistance on COVID relief resources and passport renewals, and sprang into action to help evacuate Utahns and vulnerable Afghan partners out of Afghanistan amid the botched withdrawal.

Just as important as the progress you'll read about below, Republicans were also successful in stopping bad policy that would result in higher taxes, more spending and debt, a federal takeover of our election system, the elimination of the filibuster, and the deterioration of some of our country's core values. Those efforts will continue in the coming year.

I hope you'll take a moment to read on for some 2021 highlights, and please know that I will continue to fight for Utah values and priorities in the new year. I wish you and your family the very best for a healthy, safe 2022.

A handwritten signature of Mitt Romney in blue ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

# 2021 POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

## UTAH

- Assisted with more than 1,800 constituent casework claims.
- Responded to nearly 480,000 pieces of constituent mail.
- Met with hundreds of constituents and Utah businesses throughout the state.
- Helped secure funding for the PILT program in FY21 through the appropriations process. The Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program helps to fund local services including road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, and emergency medical, in many of Utah’s rural counties.
- Introduced [legislation](#) to ensure counties do not lose out on essential services due to federal land ownership by reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program through September 2022. The SRS program helps fund essential services in rural communities that are home to federal land.
- Helped introduce the [University of Utah Research Park Act](#), legislation to protect Research Park—a center for research and development serving both the University and the local workforce.
- Introduced the [Saline Lake Ecosystems in the Great Basin States Program Act](#), bipartisan legislation to facilitate an integrated regional assessment of saline lake ecosystems that would fill a critical data gap that has made it nearly impossible to address a variety of problems caused by declining water levels.



Utah is the second largest producer of tart cherries in the nation. In July, Senator Romney visited Payson Fruit Growers, a co-op of family farms, to learn about the challenges they’re facing—namely labor shortages, current trade practices, and the historic drought—and even got to try his hand at operating the cherry shaker.



In August, following the 541-acre Parleys Canyon Fire, Senator Romney met with the Summit County Sheriff and the Park City Fire Chief to discuss lessons learned during the well-executed local response and the important wildfire provisions that have since become law with the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- The bipartisan infrastructure bill, signed into law on November 15, 2021, provided an historic \$550 billion investment in our country's physical infrastructure without raising taxes, without raising taxes or adding trillions to the deficit, and spending less than one-third of the President's original plan. This bill was negotiated by Senator Romney and nine of his Senate colleagues.
  - Authorizes \$3 Billion for Utah's roads and highways.
  - Includes key legislative priorities championed by Senator Romney:
    - [Smart Intersections Act](#): Provides resources to state, local, and tribal governments to improve the functioning of their traffic signals;
    - [Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Act](#): Establishes a commission to study and recommend fire prevention, mitigation, management, and rehabilitation policies for forests and grasslands;
    - Secures additional funding for wildfire mitigation and recovery, including hazardous fuel removal, burned area recovery, prescribed fires, shared stewardship contracts and agreements, and more;
    - \$50 million for Central Utah Project Completion Act: Provides water for municipal use, mitigation, hydroelectric power, fish and wildlife, and conservation;
    - \$500 million for the Western Area Power Administration for drought-related shortfalls;
    - \$300 million to fund outstanding Emergency Watershed Program needs for post-fire recovery and wildfire mitigation;
    - \$1 billion for the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC) program for pre-disaster mitigation, including wildfire and drought projects;
    - \$214 million to fully fund the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement: Legislation to bring running water to the 40% of Navajo Nation in Utah who lack it.
  - Delivers \$219 million to Utah for water revolving funds through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program & Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.
  - Provides \$65 billion to expand broadband access across the country—building on Senator Romney's efforts to expand broadband access to unserved and underserved communities in Utah.
  - Provides \$1 billion investment to initiate cleanup of previously unfunded Superfund sites across the country—including the Superfund Site in Stockton, Utah.

Read more about how the bipartisan infrastructure bill will benefit Utah, [here](#).

## BUDGET & DEBT

- Continued building support for the [TRUST Act](#)—bipartisan, bicameral legislation which would create committees in Congress specifically tasked with developing solutions to rescue our major, endangered federal trust funds. Senator Romney's [TRUST Act](#) amendment passed in February by a vote of 71-29.

## CLIMATE

- Helped introduce the [Growing Climate Solutions Act](#), which passed the Senate, to incentivize farmers, ranchers, and private landowners to participate in voluntary carbon markets and strive to reduce harmful emissions from the agricultural sector.

## DROUGHT & WILDFIRES

- Successfully passed the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Act of 2021, bipartisan and bicameral legislation to establish a commission of federal and non-federal stakeholders—including city and county level representation—to study and recommend fire prevention, mitigation, management, and rehabilitation policies for forests and grasslands. This legislation became law with the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill.
- Introduced the MATCH Act, legislation to expedite disaster cleanup, save taxpayers money, and prevent further disasters.



*In September, Senator Romney floated down the Colorado River with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) and local leaders to discuss a bipartisan approach to address drought, wildfire, and mudslides in the West. The group launched their trip from Moab, Utah.*

## PUBLIC LANDS

- Introduced the Protect Utah Rural Economy (PURE) Act with Senator Lee, which would protect Utah from Presidential Antiquities Act abuse in much the same way Alaska and Wyoming are currently protected. By unilaterally expanding the boundaries of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments this year, the Biden Administration missed an opportunity to work with state, local, and tribal leaders, as well as the Utah congressional delegation, to find a permanent, legislative solution for the boundaries and management of our national monuments.
- Introduced the Bonneville Shoreline Trail Advancement Act, which would adjust the boundaries of the trail to ensure that construction can be fully completed and Utahns can enjoy its wide range of recreational opportunities for years to come.
- Introduced the Protecting our Wealth of Energy Resources (POWER) Act, which would prohibit the president or his secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Energy departments from blocking energy or mineral leasing and permitting on federal lands and waters without Congressional approval.



*In April, prior to the Biden Administration's announcement of unilateral plans to re-expand the boundaries of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, Senator Romney, along with state and delegation officials, invited Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to tour Bears Ears to further advocated for a permanent, legislative solution for the boundaries and management of Utah's national monuments.*

## FOREIGN POLICY & NATIONAL SECURITY

- U.S. diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing in response to the grave human rights abuses being carried out by the Chinese Communist Party:
  - Senator Romney was at the forefront of this idea with an op-ed in March.
  - The Senate passed the Romney amendment codifying a diplomatic boycott in June with the passage of the *U.S. Innovation and Competition Act*.
  - President Biden announced the diplomatic boycott in December.
- *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, signed into law:
  - Requires the president to develop a grand strategy to address the new era of geostrategic and geoeconomic competition with China. Convenes an advisory board of outside experts from the private sector, academia, and think tanks to review the current strategy, including challenging its assumptions and approach, and make recommendations to the president for the strategy. (amendment authored by Senator Romney)
  - Supports the role Utah’s Hill Air Force Base plays in bolstering the U.S. nuclear deterrent. This includes the authorization of \$4.4 billion for the Air Force’s F-35A program and \$2.6 billion for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD).
  - Authorizes a memorial to honor members of the Armed Forces—including Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, of Sandy, Utah—who were killed in the terrorist attacks at Hamid Karzai International Airport.
- *U.S. Innovation and Competition Act* (a large package of China-related bills), which passed the Senate in June, included eight amendments authored by Senator Romney, such as:
  - Mandating a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Olympics in light of the Chinese Communist Party’s ongoing human rights abuses, including the Uyghur genocide.
  - Directing the U.S. Trade Representative to enter negotiations with our allies to stop the importation of goods made with stolen intellectual property into the U.S. and allied countries.
  - Deterring China from using force against Taiwan by pressing the administration and allies to develop and coordinate the significant consequences China should expect if it uses force.
  - Directing the Department of State to consult with close allies regarding the newly mandated intellectual property violators list.
  - Read more about Senator Romney’s amendments to the *U.S. Innovation and Competition Act*, [here](#).
- Helped introduce the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act*, legislation to help keep China and corporations accountable by ensuring goods made with Uyghur slave labor are not sold in the U.S.
- Introduced the *Taiwan Deterrence Act*, legislation to bolster deterrence across the Taiwan Strait and strengthen Taiwan’s ability to defend against Chinese aggression and coercion.
- Helped introduce the *Afghanistan Counterterrorism, Oversight, and Accountability Act*, legislation to address the outstanding issues related to the Administration’s disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- Helped introduce a [bipartisan bill](#) to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the 13 American servicemembers who lost their lives during the terrorist attacks in Kabul, Afghanistan, on August 26th, including Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover of Sandy, Utah. This bill became law on Dec. 16, 2021.

## HEALTHCARE

- Introduced the *Resources to Prevent Youth Vaping Act* to require manufacturers to pay user fees to the FDA to help fund stronger oversight of the e-cigarette industry and increase awareness for the danger of e-cigarettes.

## WORKING FAMILIES

- Introduced the *Family Security Act*—legislation to modernize federal support into a monthly cash benefit that lets parents choose how best to support their family. The Family Security Act would also support families during pregnancy, promote marriage, and provide equal treatment for both working and stay-at-home parents.
- Introduced the *Earn to Learn Act*—legislation which aims to reduce student loan debt and make college more affordable for students by establishing a college matched-saving program that helps qualifying low-income students pay for tuition, books, fees, and other education-related expenses.
- Introduced the *Higher Wages for American Workers Act*, legislation which would gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$10 and mandate E-Verify to ensure the wage increase only goes to legal workers. The bill will also index future minimum wage increases to inflation and includes protections for small businesses.



Alongside his Senate Republican colleagues at a press conference detailing how the child care provisions in Democrats' BBB plan would negatively impact child care providers and families, Senator Romney promoted his Family Security Act and called out Democrats for not working with Republicans on legislation that would affect how America's children are raised.

## PROTECTING LIFE

- Helped introduce the *No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act*, which would make restrictions on using federal taxpayer dollars to fund abortions permanent.
- Helped introduce the *Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act*, legislation which would protect unborn children at 20 weeks after fertilization, a point at which scientific evidence suggests the unborn child is able to feel pain.