



POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

2023



Looking back on this past year, our country and the world faced great challenges. Here at home, inflation continued to make daily life more expensive for families. Illegal immigration reached historic levels, overwhelming communities and jeopardizing our national security. Bitter partisanship stymied legislative progress in Washington and continues to weaken our society's critical institutions. Abroad, Ukrainians continued to defy the odds as they defended themselves against Putin's illegal invasion. And one of our closest allies—Israel—endured unconscionable and inhumane attacks by Hamas terrorists.

In spite of these challenges and difficulties, we must not overlook the blessings in our lives—and we must not take for granted the freedoms and liberties we have as Americans. I remain grateful for the opportunity to represent Utahns in the Senate and work to tackle some of these complex challenges.

Around the world, democracy and freedom are under attack, and no entity seeks to benefit from that more than the Chinese Communist Party, which has set in motion a plan for China to become the global superpower in the coming decades. This past year, I secured into law several provisions to help protect the United States from this growing threat by bolstering our domestic critical mineral capabilities, addressing our military recruiting crisis, exposing the true extent of China's defense-industrial build-up, prohibiting the government purchase of drones from China, and working to end China's unfair international advantages. I also continued pushing the Administration to develop a comprehensive China strategy, which they are required to do by law.

To reinforce the important role Utah plays our national defense, I secured into law measures to bolster the Sentinel Program—a critical part of our nuclear deterrent efforts—and support the work being done at Dugway Proving Ground. I also supported our annual defense bill, which provided \$4.7 billion in funding for new F-35A fighters for the Air Force and authorized new military construction projects at Hill Air Force Base.

The negative impacts of social media on the wellbeing of our children have become more and more evident. In tandem with Governor Cox's efforts in Utah, I worked to reduce the harmful effects of social media on our children and limit cellphone use during instructional time. Two of my bipartisan provisions to help us better understand the impact of smartphones in the classroom—on students' GPAs, their mental health, and more—advanced out of committee this past year and it is my hope they will be considered by the full Senate in short order. I also introduced legislation to comprehensively address the ongoing threat of technology, like TikTok, from foreign adversaries.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill continued to benefit Utah this past year, with our state receiving hundreds of millions of dollars to improve its bridges, roads and highways, public transit, broadband, and water infrastructure. The Wildland Fire Commission, established by the infrastructure bill, also released its report in September. My team and I will be working with our Western colleagues this year to act on some of the Commission's most promising recommendations to prevent, mitigate, suppress, and manage wildland fires.

In a continued effort to bring a passport agency to Salt Lake City, I was able to help enact a requirement that the State Department produce a strategy to provide urgent, in-person passport services for Americans who live more than a five-hour drive from the nearest passport agency. I'm proud that in 2023, our Utah team was also able to assist nearly 2,800 constituents with casework claims, helping Utahns navigate the federal bureaucracy for these passport services, veterans' benefits, and much more. We will continue to fight for priorities that are critically important to our citizens as we enter this next session of the 118th Congress.

Top of mind for 2024 is getting our country on a solid economic footing. Excessive spending in Washington has fueled inflation and led to a staggering \$34 trillion in national debt. The interest on our debt alone—\$659 billion last fiscal year—is now our fourth largest budget expenditure. I am leading a bipartisan bill—the Fiscal Stability Act—to create a fiscal commission to stabilize our public debt and strengthen our fiscal health. Getting this commission stood up will be one of my top priorities in the coming months. I also hope we can make headway on meaningful policies that help Utah families, mitigate the risks of artificial intelligence, and prevent federal overreach—especially when it comes to our public lands.

It is an honor to serve the people of our state. As begin anew in 2024, I wish you and your family the very best for a healthy and prosperous year.

2023 POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

UTAH

- Assisted 1,630 Utahns with casework claims.
- Assisted with nearly 2,800 constituent casework claims.
- Responded to more than 48,000 pieces of constituent mail.
- Met with more than 1,000 Utahns and Utah businesses throughout the state.
- Continued efforts to bring a passport agency to Salt Lake City and improve Utahns' access to consular services by securing into law a [requirement](#) that the State Department produce a strategy to provide urgent, in-person passport services for Americans that live more than a five-hour drive from the nearest passport agency.
- Secured [Senate passage](#) of a [formal challenge](#) to the Biden Administration's Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, which will impose harmful and burdensome regulations on Utah's farmers, ranchers, and landowners.
- Helped introduce bipartisan [legislation](#) to provide greater support for Colorado River Basin water users and local governments working to reduce the salt load in the river.
- Secured [committee passage](#) of bipartisan [legislation](#) to extend the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program for seven years to help protect threatened and endangered native fish species.



Senator Romney meets with Great Salt Lake Commissioner Brian Steed and the bipartisan group of senators from the Colorado River states to discuss water conservation efforts in Utah and the West.



In North Salt Lake, Senator Romney tours OxEon Energy's manufacturing facility to learn more about their work to create sustainable clean energy technologies.

UTAH, CONTINUED

- Helped [secure federal investment](#) in Utah’s critical mineral production and manufacturing industry.
- Secured [committee passage of legislation](#) to preserve the University of Utah’s nearly 600-acre research park and avoid possible action by the Bureau of Land Management to repurpose the land.
- Helped introduce bipartisan [legislation](#) to require social media companies to share more data with the public and researchers in an effort to help parents and policymakers better understand the impacts social media has on society.
- Introduced bipartisan emergency wildfire [legislation](#) to expedite disaster cleanup, save taxpayers money, and prevent further disasters.
- Helped introduce bipartisan [legislation](#) to make it easy for “Good Samaritans,” like state agencies, local governments, and nonprofits, to clean up and improve water quality in and around abandoned hardrock mines.



Senator Romney tours Bonnell Aluminum in Clearfield to discuss how China’s predatory tactics in materials markets threaten Utah businesses and the U.S. industrial base.

PUBLIC LANDS

- Helped introduce legislation to reform the *Antiquities Act of 1906* to ensure more transparent and accountable designations of national monuments.
- Helped introduce [legislation](#) to protect multiple use policy on federal lands by blocking the Bureau of Land Management’s proposed Public Lands Rule, which locks away taxpayer-owned lands from activities that are essential to local economies, including grazing, energy development, and tourism.

OPPOSING EXECUTIVE OVERREACH

- [Urged](#) the Administration to withdraw the unlawful “Clean Power Plan 2.0,” which effectively shuts down affordable and reliable energy, intensifying the energy shortage the United States is already facing.
- [Challenged](#) President Biden’s ESG rule, which politicizes millions of Americans’ retirement investments to favor Biden’s ideological preferences rather than getting the best returns for Americans.
- Helped introduce a [resolution](#) to prevent the Biden Administration’s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) from enforcing an anti-Second Amendment pistol brace rule.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Assisted Utah communities in securing funding from the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, including:
 - \$24.5 million for the Utah Department of Transportation to fund pedestrian and bicycle improvements to 10 light rail stations and 13 bus stops along the Wasatch Front.
 - \$317 million to the State of Utah to help expand high-speed internet access to rural and underserved communities.
 - \$70 million to Utah Department of Transportation for the I-15 South Iron County Freight, Mobility, and Safety project.
 - \$29 million to the Salt Lake City International Airport for a phased Terminal and North Concourse Redevelopment Program replacing aging and capacity constrained facilities.
 - \$7.4 million to Park City Transit to improve more than 72 bus stops, including rider amenities.
 - \$12 million to the State of Utah for clean water projects that will support communities in upgrading essential water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure that protects public health and bodies of water.
 - \$60 million to the Utah Transit Authority for its Light Rail Vehicle Replacement Project.
 - \$10 million to advance wildfire resilience work and support fuels management projects on 43,240 acres of land across Utah.
 - Increased funding for the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Northern Utah and the Pine Valley area of the Dixie National Forest near St. George to build critical infrastructure and strengthen wildfire resilience to protect from catastrophic wildfire.
- Welcomed a new report from the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission—which Romney secured into law in the bipartisan infrastructure bill—that reexamines existing approaches to aviation fleet procurement, mobilization, composition, and quantity in order to set aviation management on a new trajectory for the next decade and beyond.
- Celebrated the diversion of the Provo River into channels and ponds—a major milestone in the Provo River Delta Restoration Project—which was allocated \$10 million in funding from the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission when Romney secured \$50 million for the Central Utah Project Completion Act in the infrastructure bill.



UDOT Executive Director Carlos Braceras shows Senator Romney the deteriorating Willow Green Circle Bridge—one of the state's 90 bridges being rebuilt using funds from the infrastructure bill.



Senator Romney tours a Utah Department of Transportation jobsite along I-80 to see how funds from the bipartisan infrastructure bill are being used to expand Utah's roads and highways.

FOREIGN POLICY & NATIONAL SECURITY

- Secured into law, through the annual defense bill, legislation to:
 - Support Dugway Proving Ground in Utah.
 - Bolster the Sentinel Program—which has a major presence at Hill Air Force Base—and the critical role it plays in our strategic deterrence efforts.
 - Advance U.S. critical mineral independence from China, Russia, and other geostrategic competitors and adversaries.
 - End China’s unfair international advantages by opposing China being labeled as a “developing nation” in international organizations and future treaties.
 - Promote military service and help address our recruiting crisis by enhancing military recruiter access to high schools and colleges—a priority for our military.
 - Expose China’s defense spending by requiring the Department of Defense to complete a comprehensive analysis exposing the true extent of China’s defense-industrial build up.
 - Prohibit the government purchase of drones from China and other entities identified as national security threats.
 - Require the Administration to develop a strategy toward the Black Sea region to counter Russian aggression.
- Supported \$4.7 billion in funding for new F-35A fighters for the Air Force and the authorization of new military construction projects at Hill Air Force Base.
- Held the Administration accountable for failing to secure the border despite receiving congressionally-appropriated funds to continue construction of the border wall.
- Secured committee passage of his *Taiwan Tax Agreement Act of 2023*, bipartisan legislation authorizing the Administration to negotiate and conclude a tax agreement between the United States and Taiwan.
- Helped introduce bipartisan legislation to comprehensively address the ongoing threat posed by technology from foreign adversaries (like TikTok).
- Urged the Administration to designate copper as an official U.S. Geological Survey Critical Mineral, emphasizing its well-documented importance to national security, water infrastructure, electrical and clean energy infrastructure, and more.
- Demanded answers from the Attorney General regarding reports of Chinese Intelligence outposts operating inside the United States, including in Salt Lake City.
- Urged the Administration to conduct a nationwide audit to determine the extent of funding from hostile foreign adversaries, including the Chinese Communist Party in schools.
- Helped introduce legislation to strengthen oversight of science and technology agreements between the U.S. and China.



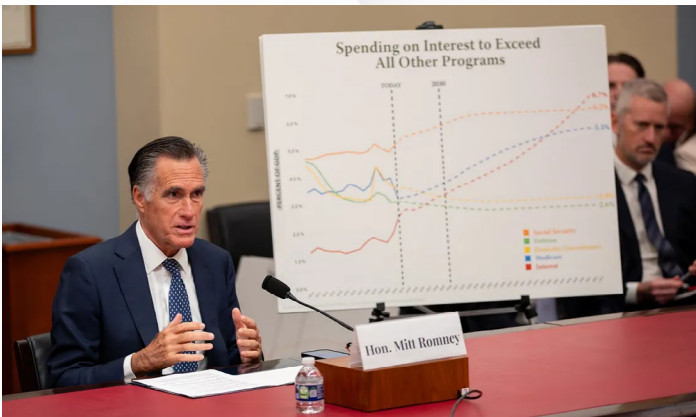
Senator Romney tours Utah's Teal Drones, which is helping secure our domestic supply of drones.



Senator Romney visits the Roy Innovation Center to discuss the Sentinel program's role in our deterrence efforts.

BUDGET, DEBT & GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

- Led new [legislation](#) to create a bipartisan, bicameral fiscal commission tasked with strengthening America's fiscal health and stabilizing our nation's debt for future generations.
- Joined colleagues in [mounting formal challenges](#) to President Biden's various student loan cancellation [schemes](#), which would transfer hundreds of billions of dollars of student loan debt onto the shoulders of hardworking American taxpayers.
- Led bipartisan efforts to help [increase accountability](#) of COVID-era funding, [prevent fraud](#) in future emergency spending, and [eliminate and consolidate](#) duplicative federal programs to save taxpayers money.



Following the introduction of his Fiscal Stability Act, Senator Romney testifies in front of the House Budget Committee about the urgent need for a bipartisan, bicameral fiscal commission stabilize our nation's finances for future generations.



Senator Romney, along with Senator Hassan (D-NH), leads a Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing to examine federal COVID-era spending and solutions to prevent fraud in future emergency spending.

HEALTH CARE

- Helped [lead negotiations](#) for the [Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Response Act](#) (PAHPA), bipartisan legislation to help prepare the United States for the next public health emergency. The package, which overwhelmingly passed out of the Senate Health Committee, [contained several of Romney's public health policies](#), including measures that:
 - Establish a five-year pilot program to create a real-time, publicly available website at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track the spread of infectious disease with voluntary and de-identified data. The CDC established the Office of Public Health Data, Surveillance, and Technology earlier this year following Romney's [proposal](#) for the creation of a [Center for Public Health Data](#) (CPHD).
 - [Strengthen and expand](#) the National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS), which coordinates and builds the United States' capacity to track the presence of infectious-disease causing pathogens in wastewater, bolstering Utah's already sophisticated wastewater monitoring technology.
- Reintroduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to help combat the drug epidemic by increasing access to substance use disorder treatment.

EDUCATION

- Secured [committee passage](#) of bipartisan amendments aimed at better understanding the impact of smartphones in the classroom.
- Introduced [legislation](#) to modernize the college reporting system for postsecondary data by providing accurate reporting on student outcomes to ensure that students and families have better information as they consider higher education opportunities.
- Introduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to cement competency-based education in federal law, highlighting the importance of CBE programs—like those offered at Western Governors University.
- Introduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to improve transparency and inform the decision-making of prospective students by ensuring the reporting of graduation rates accurately reflect the success of community colleges.
- Reintroduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to responsibly reduce student loan debt and help make college more affordable for students by establishing a college matched-savings program that helps qualifying low-income students, including adult learners, pay for tuition, books, fees, and other education-related expenses.
- Reintroduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to provide school leaders with the tools and training to support early childhood educators.



Senator Romney speaks with University of Utah students during an event with the Sutherland Institute.



During their visit to Washington, Senator Romney welcomes Utah high school students to the U.S. Capitol.

BANKING

- Helped introduce bipartisan [legislation](#) to expand financial sanctions to cover all terrorist organizations—including Hamas—and equip the Treasury Department with additional resources to counter terrorism and address emerging threats involving digital assets.
- Helped introduce bipartisan [legislation](#) to prevent money laundering and stop crypto-facilitated crime and sanctions violations by requiring decentralized finance (DeFi) services to meet the same anti-money laundering (AML) and economic sanctions compliance obligations as other financial companies.
- Helped introduce [legislation](#) to prevent the IRS from being used as a political weapon against conservative non-profit groups.

WORKING FAMILIES

- Introduced [legislation](#) to gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$11, tying future minimum wage increases to inflation, and mandate E-Verify to ensure the wage increase only goes to legal workers.