

Political Signs Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jordan D. Teuscher

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**Committee Note:**

The Government Operations Interim Committee recommended this bill.

Legislative Vote: 13 voting for 1 voting against 3 absent

General Description:

This bill amends provisions related to political signs.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ specifies the form and placement of the disclosure for political advertisements;
- ▶ reduces the size dimensions of a political sign that is exempt from disclosing, on the sign, the person who paid for the sign;
- ▶ prohibits a person from:
 - attaching a political sign to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal; or
 - affixing an object to a political sign for the purpose of blocking, concealing, or misrepresenting the message or image on the political sign;
- ▶ expands existing criminal penalties for defacing political signs to cover the conduct described above, and specifies exceptions for:
 - a person who removes a political sign that does not contain the disclosure described above;
 - a person who removes a political sign that violates the prohibition on electioneering in or near a polling place;
 - a government employee who removes a political sign in the course of the government employee's duties;
 - a person who removes an object that blocks or conceals a political sign; or
 - a person who removes a political sign that is attached to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal;

- 31 ▶ requires each county and municipality to designate one or more locations where a person
 32 who removes a political sign may deposit the political sign for safekeeping or disposal;
 33 ▶ requires a person who removes a political sign under specified circumstances to deposit
 34 the sign at a designated location described above;
 35 ▶ for a county or municipality that receives a political sign, requires the county or
 36 municipality to:
- 37 • contact the owner of the political sign; and
 - 38 • notify the owner to take possession of the political sign;
- 39 ▶ authorizes a county or municipality to, in certain circumstances:
- 40 • dispose of a political sign; and
 - 41 • seek reimbursement from the owner of the political sign for the sign's safekeeping or
 42 disposal; and
- 43 ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

44 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

45 None

46 **Other Special Clauses:**

47 This bill provides a special effective date.

48 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

49 AMENDS:

50 **20A-11-901 (Effective 01/01/27)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 18

51 **20A-17-102 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 238

52 **20A-17-103 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 15

53 ENACTS:

54 **20A-17-101.5 (Effective 05/06/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

55 **20A-17-104 (Effective 05/06/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

57 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

58 Section 1. Section **20A-11-901** is amended to read:

59 **20A-11-901 (Effective 01/01/27). Political advertisements -- Requirement that**
 60 **ads designate responsibility and authorization -- Report to lieutenant governor --**
 61 **Unauthorized use of endorsements.**

62 (1)(a) Whenever any person makes an expenditure for the purpose of financing an
 63 advertisement expressly advocating for the election or defeat of a clearly identified
 64 candidate, or solicits any contribution through any broadcasting station, newspaper,

65 magazine, outdoor advertising facility, direct mailing, or any other type of general
66 public political advertising, the advertisement:

- 67 (i) if paid for and authorized by a candidate or the candidate's campaign committee,
68 shall [~~clearly state~~] disclose that the advertisement has been paid for by the
69 candidate or the campaign committee;
- 70 (ii) if paid for by another person but authorized by a candidate or the candidate's
71 campaign committee, shall [~~clearly state~~] disclose who paid for the advertisement
72 and that the candidate or the campaign committee authorized the advertisement; or
- 73 (iii) if not authorized by a candidate or a candidate's campaign committee, shall [
74 ~~clearly state~~] disclose the name of the person who paid for the advertisement and
75 state that the advertisement is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's
76 committee.

77 (2)(a) A person that makes an expenditure for the purpose of financing an advertisement
78 related to a ballot proposition shall ensure that the advertisement complies with
79 Subsection (2)(b) if the advertisement expressly advocates:

- 80 (i) for placing a ballot proposition on the ballot;
81 (ii) for keeping a ballot proposition off the ballot;
82 (iii) that a voter refrain from voting on a ballot proposition; or
83 (iv) that a voter vote for or against a ballot proposition.

84 (b) An advertisement described in Subsection (2)(a) shall:

- 85 (i) if paid for by a political issues committee, [~~clearly state~~] disclose that the
86 advertisement was paid for by the political issues committee;
- 87 (ii) if paid for by another person but authorized by a political issues committee, [
88 ~~clearly state~~] disclose who paid for the advertisement and that the political issues
89 committee authorized the advertisement; or
- 90 (iii) if not authorized by a political issues committee, [~~clearly state~~] disclose the name
91 of the person who paid for the advertisement and state that the advertisement is
92 not authorized by any political issues committee.

93 (3)(a) The disclosure described in Subsections (1) and (2) shall:

- 94 (i) clearly and conspicuously identify for the reader, observer, or listener the person
95 who paid for the advertisement and, where required, the authorization related to
96 the advertisement; and
- 97 (ii) as it relates to a printed advertisement:
- 98 (A) if the advertisement is a billboard or outdoor advertising facility, include text

99 that is large enough to be easily readable by an ordinary observer at a
 100 reasonable distance from which the advertisement is intended to be viewed; or

101 (B) if the advertisement is a political sign that is not a billboard or outdoor
 102 advertising facility, include text that is reasonably legible to a individual
 103 standing near the political sign;

104 (b) The text described in Subsection (3)(a)(ii)(B) may be printed in small type or affixed
 105 to the back of the advertisement.

106 [~~(3)~~] (4) The requirements of Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to:

107 (a) [~~lawn signs with dimensions of four by eight feet or smaller~~] a political sign, as that
 108 term is defined in Section 20A-17-101.5, with dimensions that are less than 24 by 18
 109 inches;

110 (b) bumper stickers;

111 (c) campaign pins, buttons, and pens; or

112 (d) similar small items upon which the disclaimer cannot be conveniently printed.

113 [~~(4)~~] (5)(a) A person who is not a reporting entity and pays for an electioneering
 114 communication shall file a report with the lieutenant governor within 24 hours of
 115 making the payment or entering into a contract to make the payment.

116 (b) The report shall include:

117 (i) the name and address of the person described in Subsection [~~(4)(a)~~] (5)(a);

118 (ii) the name and address of each person contributing at least \$100 to the person
 119 described in Subsection [~~(4)(a)~~] (5)(a) for the purpose of disseminating the
 120 electioneering communication;

121 (iii) the amount spent on the electioneering communication;

122 (iv) the name of the identified referenced candidate; and

123 (v) the medium used to disseminate the electioneering communication.

124 [~~(5)~~] (6) A person may not, in order to promote the success of any candidate for nomination
 125 or election to any public office, or in connection with any question submitted to the
 126 voters, include or cause to be included the name of any person as endorser or supporter
 127 in any political advertisement, circular, poster, or publication without the express
 128 consent of that person.

129 [~~(6)~~] (7)(a) It is unlawful for a person to pay the owner, editor, publisher, or agent of any
 130 newspaper or other periodical to induce the owner, editor, publisher, or agent to
 131 advocate or oppose editorially any candidate for nomination or election.

132 (b) It is unlawful for any owner, editor, publisher, or agent to accept any payment to

133 advocate or oppose editorially any candidate for nomination or election.

134 Section 2. Section **20A-17-101.5** is enacted to read:

135 **20A-17-101.5 (Effective 05/06/26). Definitions.**

136 As used in this chapter:

137 (1) "Contact information" means:

138 (a) as it relates to a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
139 committee:

140 (i) the address and telephone number for the candidate that the candidate designates
141 on a declaration of candidacy as the address and telephone number where the
142 candidate may be contacted to receive official election notices; or

143 (ii) if the address or telephone number described in Subsection (1)(a) is a protected
144 record under Section 63G-2-305, the alternative address or telephone number that
145 the candidate filing the declaration of candidacy provides to the election officer;
146 and

147 (b) as it relates to a filing entity other than a filing entity who is a candidate for public
148 office, the name, address, and telephone number of an officer for the filing entity that
149 the filing entity provides to the lieutenant governor in a statement of organization or
150 financial statement filed under Chapter 11, Campaign and Financial Reporting
151 Requirements.

152 (2) "Filing entity" means the same as that term is defined in Section 20A-11-101.

153 (3) "Political sign" means any sign or document that advocates:

154 (a) the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or

155 (b) the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.

156 (4) "Railroad sign or signal" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-6a-102.

157 (5)(a) "Roadway" means:

158 (i) a state highway, as described in Section 72-3-102;

159 (ii) a county road, as described in Section 72-3-103;

160 (iii) a city street, as described in Section 72-3-104;

161 (iv) a class D road, as described in Section 72-3-105; or

162 (v) a rail-based fixed guideway operated by a large public transit district.

163 (b) Roadway" includes:

164 (i) the right-of-way for a roadway; and

165 (ii) infrastructure appurtenant to a roadway that is owned, maintained, or controlled
166 by:

- 167 (A) a county or municipality;
 168 (B) a large public transit district organized under Title 17B, Chapter 2a, Part 8,
 169 Public Transit District Act; or
 170 (C) the Department of Transportation created in Title 72, Chapter 1, Part 2,
 171 Department of Transportation.

172 (6) "Sign owner" means a person who is required to make a disclosure described in
 173 Subsection 20A-11-901(1) or (2) on a political sign because the person paid for the
 174 political sign.

175 Section 3. Section **20A-17-102** is amended to read:

176 **20A-17-102 (Effective 05/06/26). Political signs -- Prohibition on vandalism --**

177 **Exceptions.**

178 [~~(1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if the~~
 179 ~~person knowingly removes, alters, defaces, or otherwise vandalizes a sign:]~~

180 [~~(a) advocating the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or]~~

181 [~~(b) advocating the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.]~~

182 (1) Except as provided in Subsection (3) or (5), a person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor
 183 if the person knowingly:

184 (a) removes, disposes of, alters, defaces, or otherwise vandalizes a political sign; or

185 (b) attaches or affixes any object to a political sign, including another political sign, and
 186 the object:

187 (i) hides, blocks, obscures, or otherwise substantially conceals from view the
 188 message or image on the political sign; or

189 (ii) changes or misrepresents the intent of the message on the political sign.

190 (2) A person is guilty of an infraction if the person knowingly attaches or affixes a political
 191 sign to a utility pole, light pole, an electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any
 192 railroad sign or signal.

193 [~~(2)] (3) A person is not guilty of a violation of Subsection (1) if the person who engages in~~
 194 ~~the conduct described in Subsection (1) is:~~

195 (a) [~~as it relates to a sign described in Subsection (1)(a), the candidate or an agent of the~~
 196 ~~candidate] the sign owner;~~

197 (b) [~~as it relates to a sign described in Subsection (1)(b),]~~ the person who placed the
 198 political sign, the person who directed the placement of the political sign, or an agent
 199 of either;

200 (c) a property owner of property or of a right-of-way adjacent to property on which the

201 political sign is placed, or the property owner's agent; or
 202 (d) a public official [~~who removes the sign in accordance with an official duty of the~~
 203 ~~public official]~~ or government employee who removes the political sign in accordance
 204 with the duties of the public official or government employee.

205 (4) A sign owner that posts or displays a political sign on a roadway shall ensure that the
 206 political sign is removed from the roadway no later than 14 calendar days after the day
 207 of the election to which the political sign relates.

208 (5) Notwithstanding Subsection (1)(a), any person may:

209 (a) in response to another person engaging in the conduct described in Subsection (1)(b),
 210 remove the object that is attached or affixed to the political sign;

211 (b) in response to another person engaging in the conduct described in Subsection (2),
 212 remove the political sign that is attached or affixed to a utility pole, light pole, an
 213 electric utility box, a traffic control device, or any railroad sign or signal;

214 (c) remove a political sign that is posted or displayed on a roadway for longer than the
 215 time period described in Subsection; or

216 (d) remove a political sign because:

217 (i)(A) the size dimensions of the political sign are equal to or greater than the size
 218 dimensions described in Subsection 20A-11-901(4)(a); and

219 (B) the political sign does not contain the disclosure described in Subsection
 220 20A-11-901(1) or (2); or

221 (ii) the political sign is posted or displayed in a location that violates the prohibition
 222 against electioneering described in Subsection 20A-3a-501(2)(a)(i).

223 (6) A person who removes a political sign under Subsection (3)(d) or (5)(d) shall deposit
 224 the political sign at a location described in Subsection 20A-17-104(1).

225 (7) Nothing in this section limits the prosecution or sentencing of a person who, while
 226 removing a political sign or an object attached or affixed to a political sign under
 227 Subsection (3) or (5), commits an offense under Title 76, Utah Criminal Code.

228 Section 4. Section **20A-17-103** is amended to read:

229 **20A-17-103 (Effective 05/06/26). Posting political signs on public property.**

230 (1) As used in this section:

231 (a) "Local government entity" means:

232 (i) a county, municipality, or other political subdivision;

233 (ii) a special district, as defined in Section 17B-1-102;

234 (iii) a special service district, as defined in Section 17D-1-102;

- 235 (iv) a local building authority, as defined in Section 17D-2-102;
- 236 (v) a conservation district, as defined in Section 17D-3-102;
- 237 (vi) an independent entity, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;
- 238 (vii) a public corporation, as defined in Section 63E-1-102;
- 239 (viii) a public transit district, organized under Title 17B, Chapter 2a, Part 8, Public
- 240 Transit District Act;
- 241 (ix) a school district;
- 242 (x) a public school, including a charter school or other publicly funded school;
- 243 (xi) a state institution of higher education;
- 244 (xii) an entity that expends public funds; and
- 245 (xiii) each office, agency, or other division of an entity described in Subsections
- 246 (1)(a)(i) through (xii).
- 247 ~~[(b) "Political sign" means any sign or document that advocates:]~~
- 248 ~~[(i) the election or defeat of a candidate for public office; or]~~
- 249 ~~[(ii) the approval or defeat of a ballot proposition.]~~
- 250 ~~[(e)]~~ (b)(i) "Public property" means any real property, building, or structure owned or
- 251 leased by a local government entity.
- 252 (ii) "Public property" does not include any real property, building, or structure during
- 253 a period of time that the real property, building, or structure is rented out by a
- 254 government entity to a private party for a meeting, convention, or similar event.
- 255 (2) A local government entity, a local government officer, a local government employee, or
- 256 another person with authority or control over public property that posts or permits a
- 257 person to post a political sign on public property:
- 258 (a) shall permit any other person to post a political sign on the public property, subject to
- 259 the same requirements and restrictions imposed on all other political signs permitted
- 260 to be posted on the public property; and
- 261 (b) may not impose a requirement or restriction on the posting of a political sign if the
- 262 requirement or restriction is not politically neutral and content neutral.

263 Section 5. Section **20A-17-104** is enacted to read:

264 **20A-17-104 (Effective 05/06/26). Safeguarding and disposing of political signs --**

265 **County and municipal locations -- Reimbursement from sign owner.**

- 266 (1) Each county and each municipality shall designate one or more locations within the
- 267 county or municipality where an individual who removes a political sign under
- 268 Subsection 20A-17-102(3)(d) or (5)(d) may deposit the political sign for safekeeping or

- 269 disposal in accordance with this section.
- 270 (2) Subject to Subsection (3), and except as provided in Subsection (4), a county or
271 municipality that receives a political sign at a location described in Subsection (1) shall:
- 272 (a) safeguard the political sign;
- 273 (b) use reasonable efforts to obtain contact information for the sign owner:
- 274 (i) from the election officer for the election to which the political sign relates, if the
275 sign owner is a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
276 committee;
- 277 (ii) from the lieutenant governor, if the sign owner is a filing entity other than a filing
278 entity who is a candidate for public office or the candidate's personal campaign
279 committee; or
- 280 (iii) using any other lawful means available to the county or municipality;
- 281 (c) make a reasonable attempt to contact the sign owner by telephone; and
- 282 (d) notify the sign owner, either during a direct conversation or in a voicemail, that the
283 sign owner has five business days after the date of the notice to take possession of the
284 political sign.
- 285 (3) If a sign owner receives the notice described in Subsection (2)(d) but does not take
286 possession of the political sign by the deadline described in Subsection (2)(d), or, if a
287 county or municipality is unable to contact a sign owner under Subsection (2)(c), the
288 county or municipality may:
- 289 (a) dispose of the political sign; and
- 290 (b) seek reimbursement from the sign owner in accordance with Subsection (5) for the
291 cost of safekeeping or disposing of the political sign, if, during the same election
292 cycle:
- 293 (i) the county or municipality has, on three or more previous occasions, received a
294 political sign belonging to the same sign owner at a location described in
295 Subsection (1); and
- 296 (ii) on each occasion:
- 297 (A) the sign owner did not take possession of the political sign after receiving the
298 notice described in Subsection (2)(d); or
- 299 (B) the county or municipality was unable to contact the sign owner under
300 Subsection (2)(c).
- 301 (4) A county or municipality that receives a political sign at a location described in
302 Subsection (1) may dispose of the political sign if the county or municipality:

- 303 (a) cannot identify the sign owner; or
- 304 (b) cannot obtain contact information for the sign owner under Subsection (2)(b).
- 305 (5)(a) A county or municipality that seeks reimbursement under Subsection (3)(b) shall
- 306 mail a reimbursement notice to the sign owner using the contact information that the
- 307 county or municipality obtains under Subsection (2)(b).
- 308 (b) A reimbursement notice shall include:
- 309 (i) the number of political signs safeguarded or disposed of by the county or
- 310 municipality;
- 311 (ii) subject to Subsection (5)(c), the reimbursement amount; and
- 312 (iii) any other information deemed relevant by the county or municipality to obtain
- 313 reimbursement for safeguarding or disposing of the political sign.
- 314 (c) The reimbursement amount that a county or municipality may seek for a political
- 315 sign deposited at a location described in Subsection (1) may not exceed \$20 per
- 316 deposit incident, regardless of the number of political signs belonging to the same
- 317 sign owner that are included in that deposit.
- 318 (6)(a) Subject to Subsection (6)(b), a sign owner that receives a reimbursement notice
- 319 under Subsection (5) shall pay the amount specified in the notice no later than 30
- 320 calendar days after the day on which the reimbursement notice is received in the mail.
- 321 (b) A county or municipality shall provide the sign owner a reasonable opportunity to
- 322 establish, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the payment of reimbursement is
- 323 not required.
- 324 (7) A sign owner that receives a reimbursement notice under this section may use campaign
- 325 funds to pay the reimbursement amount specified in the notice.
- 326 **Section 6. Effective Date.**
- 327 (1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), this bill takes effect May 6, 2026.
- 328 (2) The actions affecting Section 20A-11-901 (Effective 01/01/27) take effect on January
- 329 1, 2027.