

Senate Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee
02/17/2026

Bill: 1st substitute SB 239 - State Homeless Campus Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Escamilla

Floor Sponsor: Representative Hollins

UASD Position: Track

This Bill enacts provisions relating to a state homeless services campus.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 1st Substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The substitute more clearly defines the term “homeless shelter”. The Committee adopted Senate Amendment 1 which adds public health considerations and staff responsibilities related to mosquito mitigation as part of the required plan.

The sponsor stated that the Bill requires the coordinator for the Office of Homeless Services, in cooperation with the Utah Homeless Services Board, to develop a comprehensive plan for residents of a homeless services campus and the surrounding community. The plan must address safety, transportation, use of the campus as an emergency shelter, the types of treatment and support services offered to residents, and provider and staff requirements. The Bill also establishes mechanisms for reporting and mediation and creates a structured process for addressing community concerns. The sponsor emphasized that the Bill is not retroactive and does not prohibit shelters. It establishes guardrails to protect both residents and surrounding properties.

Senator Owens asked about a provision concerning behavioral and mental health staffing ratios, referencing a potential one-to-three provider-to-client ratio and questioned whether that would require approximately 400 providers for a 1,300-bed facility. The sponsor responded that the ratio applies only to certain mental and behavioral health services and that not all beds are designated for those populations. The sponsor stated that the ratio is based on evidence-based best practices but expressed willingness to work with the Senator on language to avoid mandating a rigid numerical ratio while still ensuring safety and adequate care.

The West Side Coalition spoke in support of the Bill. The Cicero Group spoke in opposition, expressing concern that the legislation may be premature. Senator Owens and Millner raised concerns about the staffing requirements. The sponsor expressed a willingness to work and amend that provision before going to the floor.

Yeas: 2

Nays: 2

N/V: 2

Outcome: 1st substitute SB 239, as amended, failed to pass out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: SB 284 - Local Land Use Modification

Sponsor: Senator Fillmore

Floor Sponsor:
UASD Position: Track

This Bill modifies provisions related to land use.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that SB 284 provides clarity in key areas of land use law, which has broad implications and application across the state. The Bill clarifies how land use rules are applied and defines what constitutes a “specified land use law”. The intent is to create clearer standards so disputes can be resolved more efficiently without unnecessary litigation.

The Bill requires municipalities to maintain a website outlining building requirements and associated fees. The sponsor noted that disputes occasionally arise and stated that elected officials who establish land use policy should not also serve as the appeal authority in those matters. Under the Bill, appeals would be directed to a designated appeal authority rather than the legislative body. Additionally, when a planning commission reviews a land use regulation, the legislative body may immediately approve or deny the regulation, which the sponsor stated will streamline the process and improve efficiency.

Senator Kwan referenced concerns raised by opponents that the Bill may limit participation in hearings and prevent a legislative body from serving as the appeal authority. The sponsor acknowledged that substitute language is likely forthcoming and confirmed that the intent is for the legislative body not to serve as the appeal authority. The sponsor indicated that most city council members supported this change, viewing it as a better way to resolve disputes. Senator Kwan also asked whether language limiting local governments’ ability to enforce their own zoning laws was still under consideration. The sponsor responded that discussions are ongoing regarding that issue, but such language is not included in the current version of the Bill. The sponsor stated that most stakeholders are generally aligned on the Bill’s objectives and that another substitute is anticipated.

Senator Owens asked whether the appeal authority would be clearly identified for applicants if a request is denied. He also noted that elected officials often serve as appeal authorities to ensure accountability. The sponsor responded that the Bill does not currently require that appeal procedures be posted online but emphasized that separating policymaking from appeals promotes fairness and transparency by ensuring appeals are decided based on facts rather than political pressures.

The Property Rights Coalition and the Utah Realtors Association spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 4
Nays: 0
N/V: 2

Outcome: SB 284 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 330 - Liability Limitations Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Jack

Floor Sponsor: Senator Winterton

UASD Position: Track

This Bill creates an affirmative defense.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 2nd substitute, explaining that it more clearly and broadly limits the scope of the affirmative defense. The substitute provides that a party may not claim government authorization as a defense if the party acted beyond the scope of that authorization or caused harm through a defective product. The Committee adopted the 2nd substitute.

The sponsor stated that the Bill creates an affirmative defense in a civil action for conduct, an omission, or a condition that was authorized or required by a governmental entity. The Bill specifies that the affirmative defense applies regardless of the theory of liability. The sponsor emphasized that the legislation does not provide blanket immunity but instead restores predictability and reinforces the rule of law by preventing courts from effectively functioning as a second legislature when conduct has been expressly authorized by the government.

The Utah Chamber of Commerce, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Utah Mining Association, and the Utah Association for Justice spoke in support. A member of the public spoke in opposition.

Yeas: 4
Nays: 0
N/V: 2

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 330 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.