



Mar. 26, 2025

Dear President Adams, Speaker Schultz, and Members of the Legislature,

As we conclude the 2026 General Session and bill review period, I want to thank you for your service to the people of Utah. Legislative sessions are a sacrifice — time away from your family, long days, and difficult decisions — and I’m grateful for the seriousness with which you approached that responsibility. This was a productive session, and Utahns are better off because of your work. I have said publicly that this was my favorite session in the 14 years I have been involved with legislation. Thank you for making our state proud.

I’m especially grateful for the collaboration that defined much of the session and for the many meaningful steps we took on issues that matter deeply to our state. Fewer bills reached my desk this year, and that’s a good thing. More legislation does not always mean better governance. As someone who believes in limited government, I’m encouraged whenever our process reflects discipline and restraint.

As always, there were bills I would not have voted for, and there were priorities I wish had turned out differently. But signing or vetoing a bill requires a different standard than simply agreeing or disagreeing with it. Many bills fell short of what I would have preferred without rising to the level of a veto. A smaller number did rise to that level, and I want to explain those decisions here. Additionally, there are times I let a bill go into law without my signature, and that is the case with one bill this year.

The first bill that I have decided to veto is **H.B. 462, School Bus Internet Access**. This bill would create a grant program to distribute money to rural school districts for those districts to install internet access on a limited number of school buses. The goal of this bill is to facilitate students in rural districts doing homework on school-issued computers during long bus rides for school sports or other activities.

I acknowledge and respect the sponsor's goal of helping students get their homework done even while they participate in extracurricular activities. And, as a student who grew up in a rural district, I recognize the added challenge of longer bus rides for rural students. But I am very concerned about signaling to our students that we value more time spent on devices rather than more time interacting with one another face-to-face. Our kids simply need less screen time and more human connection.

I realize that the practical reality right now is that kids are pushed to devices to do their homework, but it doesn't have to stay that way. I applaud the Legislature's wise efforts this year to take a step back from devices and better balance students' use of technology. I hope we continue to move in that direction. Had this bill required schools to provide paper assignments to students in extracurricular activities to add greater flexibility for them accomplishing their work, I would have supported it. But I don't support creating infrastructure to facilitate more screen time. For this reason, I have vetoed H.B. 462.

I am vetoing another bill for more technical reasons. I commend Representative Stephanie Gricius and her hard work on **H.B. 164, Health Care Patient Reporting to the Division of Professional Licensing**. Representative Gricius undertook this bill to better protect patients and their ability to bring complaints to the Division of Professional Licensing (DOPL) in appropriate circumstances. H.B. 164 sought to accomplish two things. First, it would require health care providers and their employees to tell a patient how to file a complaint with DOPL if the patient expresses concerns about a provider's conduct. Second, the bill would require disclosures to a patient before a doctor could enter into a settlement agreement that precludes a patient from filing a complaint with DOPL.

While H.B. 164 was moving through the process, a second bill on the same topic, S.B. 117, was also moving through the process. Rather than allowing the settlement agreements described above, S.B. 117 would make it unprofessional conduct for a provider to do anything that would keep a patient from filing a complaint with DOPL, including a settlement agreement that prohibited a patient from filing a complaint. In this way, the provisions of S.B. 117 and H.B. 164 conflict with each other. To address this conflict, and because I think the policy in S.B. 117 better accomplishes the stated intent, I am vetoing H.B. 164.

I applaud Representative Gricius's work on behalf of her constituents in this area. My understanding is that she intends to continue to improve policies in this area, and I look forward to working with her as she does so.

I am also allowing one bill to go into law without signature. **That bill is H.B. 195, Precious Metals Amendments**. Among other things, the bill requires the state to "to establish and operate a precious metals-backed electronic payment system on the state's behalf." I vetoed essentially

the same bill last year (then H.B. 306, Precious Metals Amendments). With this year's bill, while I have received messages in support of the bill, I have also received a significant number of messages in opposition. Many are concerned that this will result in unwelcome government involvement in the gold market.

While I vetoed the bill last year, the Legislature passed it again this year. In fact, the Legislature passed the bill even after it failed in a Senate committee (and the committee brought it back and passed it), and even after it then failed on the Senate floor (and the Senate brought it back and passed it). Though I signaled my concerns about this bill last year, the Legislature appears to be intent on passing the bill (this year with 65 Representatives and 22 Senators voting in favor). And even though I heard from some Legislators who voted for the bill and hoped that I would veto it, I have decided to allow the bill to pass into law without signature this year.

Those are the only bills I am vetoing or allowing to become law without my signature this year. I'm also issuing two line-item vetoes — one for H.B. 164 and one for a bill that did not pass — which I will address in a separate letter. Thank you for your service and for taking seriously the responsibility we carry on behalf of the people of Utah. The trust of Utahns must be earned each session through careful judgment and a shared commitment to do what is right. I look forward to continuing that work alongside you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer J. Cox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Spencer J. Cox
Governor