

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



2025

GARY R. HERBERT
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

ANNUAL REPORT

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“THE HERBERT INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AT UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY IS A PLACE FOR YOU, TOO.”



JUSTIN JONES
Executive Director,
Herbert Institute for Public Policy

Message from the Executive Director, Justin Jones



The offices of the Herbert Institute overlook UVU’s Fountain Courtyard where Charlie Kirk was speaking with students about his policy views on September 10, 2025. Like many of you, our institute was deeply affected by the events of that day. It rattled our peace and undid our innocence. We never dreamed something like that would happen on our beautiful and peaceful campus.

Despite the trauma and grief we experienced, we move forward from that day with a renewed determination to build and represent positive civic discourse at Utah Valley University and in our wider community. Our commitment to our mission to develop future leaders, gather our community for respectful dialogue, and affirm trust in our civic institutions is stronger than ever.

In this year’s Annual Report, you’ll find guest speakers including Dr. Ben Carson, Dr. Tim Shriver, Senator John Curtis (R-UT)

and Senator Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.), Ambassador Jeff Flake, and more. You’ll find research on the cutting edge of digital identity and protecting citizen data with the state. You’ll discover our new apartments in Washington, DC, subsidized for all students working or studying in the area. And you’ll be introduced to our brand-new Herbert Institute podcast and find access to all our informational and entertaining social media accounts. Despite our setbacks, we continue to rise.

“Our commitment to our mission is stronger than ever.”

Justin Jones

The events of September 10 do not represent the Herbert Institute or Utah Valley University. UVU is known regionally by the words that often accompany our logo, “A Place for You.” The Herbert Institute makes space for students from a wide variety of majors, from chemical engineering to political science to event management and graphic design. We make space for people with differing ideas. We value free speech—even when we don’t always agree with what is being said. Most of all, we value each other and the communities we serve. We remain determinedly committed to the constitutional promises our nation was founded on. We hope you’ll join us in this commitment: come to an event, keep your voter registration current, and respectfully engage in the process. The Herbert Institute for Public Policy at UVU is a place for you, too. ■

Justin Jones

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SNAP SHOT



21,489

hours worked by
Herbert interns



3,340

**students, faculty, staff, and
community members**
attended Herbert Institute
events in 2025



118

media stories with a
reach of **939.8 million**



33

events hosted by the
Herbert Institute in 2025



59

total **interns**



16

undergraduate **researchers**



10

published **academic papers**



142%

increase in
Instagram followers



386%

increase in
Instagram interaction



6X

increase in
average video views



Your Data Done Right: Utah's 2025 Data Governance Summit



By: Rebecca Whyte, Communications Assistant

From health and education to transportation, public safety, and economic opportunity, Utahns interact with government systems throughout their lives. Each interaction leaves behind data, personal information that carries both risk and potential. When data is scattered or misused, trust in government erodes. Utah Governor Spencer Cox said, "Trust is the currency of government." When data is governed well, services become safer, seamless, and more responsive to the people they are meant to serve.

This reality set the tone for the 2025 Data Governance Summit, where leaders from across Utah aligned around a shared vision—protecting the privacy of Utahns while making data work better for them. The summit convened stewards—policy leaders, agency directors, technologists, privacy professionals, and program owners—each responsible for shaping how data is collected, shared, protected, and used across government.

As Governor Cox put it, "We've always been pioneers when it comes to protecting personal rights while enabling innovation."

"We've always been pioneers when it comes to protecting personal rights while enabling innovation."

Gov. Spencer Cox

A Shared Vision

The summit was made possible through a close partnership between the Herbert Institute and the Utah Office of Data Privacy (ODP), whose work continues to shape Utah's leadership in data governance. Rather than focusing solely on rules and requirements, ODP helps shape how agencies understand, approach, and carry out responsible data practices that align with the Constitution. Their mission is to promote privacy as a cornerstone of public trust by supporting governmental entities, protecting personal data, fostering transparency, and empowering individuals to maintain control over their personal information.

This mission aligns closely with the Herbert Institute's charge to lead, gather, and build trust across Utah's public institutions.

Setting the Stage

The summit opened with remarks from Governor Cox, signaling that data governance is a leadership priority, not a technical afterthought. That message was reinforced throughout the day by voices from across Utah's executive and legislative leadership, including Christopher Bramwell, Utah's Chief Privacy Officer; Jefferson Moss, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity; Senate Majority Leader, Kirk Cullimore; and Marvin Dodge, Executive Director of the Department of Government Operations.

Their presence underscored a key theme: meaningful data governance requires alignment at every level—from the policy itself to daily operational decisions inside agencies.

The urgency behind the summit was clear. Governments are being asked to do more with data than ever before—integrate systems, personalize services, measure outcomes, and innovate responsibly all while navigating increasing privacy expectations and complex regulations. Data governance sits at the intersection of those demands.



Gov. Spencer Cox

Rather than treating privacy, transparency, and use as competing priorities, the summit framed them as mutually reinforcing. Strong governance enables responsible use. "Government likes to talk about the bruises and scars we have," Chris Bramwell stated, "But in order to move through this, we have to be very transparent about where we are so we can have an honest conversation." Transparency builds confidence. Privacy protections create conditions for innovation that are ethical and sustainable.

From Principle to Practice

Breakout sessions translated principles into real-world practice, showing how governance frameworks are being implemented across programs. The speakers turned abstract ideals into operational realities.

Sessions on state-endorsed digital identity examined how trust, privacy, and usability must be designed together from the start. Discussions on privacy compliance moved beyond checklists and focused instead on how agencies can operationalize privacy through workflows, training, and organizational culture.

Chris Bramwell noted, the urgency is deeply personal. "Why do I care about the future in privacy? There is so much data out there about us and our kids," he said. "This is why we're having this summit. The laws are outdated. There are gaps. There is duplication."

At the heart of the summit was a simple but ambitious goal—protect individuals' data privacy while making data work better for the people they represent.

That vision recognizes that individuals do not experience government in silos. A resident navigating healthcare, education, or workforce systems experiences one government, not many agencies. Effective data governance makes it possible to align systems around the individual rather than forcing individuals to navigate the system.

The values underlying this vision were echoed throughout the day:

RESPECT

for individual privacy is a foundational right.

TRANSPARENCY

is a prerequisite for trust.

ACCOUNTABILITY

is key in how data is collected, shared, and used.

STEWARDSHIP

balances innovation with responsibility.

Scale and Engagement

With more than 675 attendees representing agencies across state and local government, the summit demonstrated the breadth of engagement around data governance in Utah. Just as importantly, it revealed a shared commitment for collaboration across state entities.



Herbert Institute Cording Ceremony



Herbert Institute interns were recognized in a special cording ceremony prior to their graduation commencement ceremonies. The cording honors the knowledge they've gained, the impact they've made, and the foundation they've built for a lifetime of leadership and service. As they launch into their respective fields, these interns embody the mission of the Herbert Institute.



Is the Future Still Bright?

Uncertain Times with Tim Shriver, PhD

By: Becca Aylworth Wright, Communications Director

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

“A soft answer turns away wrath.”

“You catch more flies with honey than vinegar.”

Despite these age-old idioms, civil discourse in politics is threatening to become an oxymoron.

Dr. Tim Shriver’s family was talking about politics over the family dinner table long before he was eating solid food. His mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, is the younger sister of President John F. Kennedy, making Tim part of the politically illustrious Kennedy clan. Additionally, his father, Sargent Shriver, was an American diplomat, politician, and activist. But even in Shriver’s well-practiced family, he began to see a change in how politics was being discussed.

Contempt in Politics

At an event with the Herbert Institute, Shriver cited a September 2023 Pew Research study that found a third of Americans have “broken off relationships in our own families.” This is why Shriver, Chair of Special Olympics International, founded UNITE, a nonpartisan initiative designed to ease divisions, prevent violence, and solve problems; and he co-created the Dignity Index, a tool for examining dignity and contempt in public speech.

Shriver sees the interests of both the Special Olympics and the Dignity Index as being similar, “To take our fear of difference and replace it with dignity.” When we grant dignity to people who are different from us—either because of their developmental or intellectual differences or because of their political differences—we begin to see we aren’t so different after all.

Shriver quoted the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. saying, “I’m convinced that men hate each other because they fear

each other. They fear each other because they don’t know each other, and they don’t know each other because they don’t communicate with each other.”

After all, why would people talk to one another when all they hear from the other side is contempt? Shriver sees this contemptible language playing out in social media feeds, in partisan news, and in local, statewide, and national elections.

“Contempt is addictive. You keep coming back. The algorithm knows it. Guess who else does? Politicians. . . . And guess who else knows it? The partisan news,” Shriver says adding, “There’s \$2 trillion chasing you, making you get your fellow Americans wrong, hoping against hope that you misjudge people on the other side and hate them because it’s good for business.”

While contempt may be good for business, it’s bad for discourse surrounding public policy. Utah’s 17th Governor Gary R. Herbert recently stated, “The partisan divide is so vitriolic that you wonder, ‘Does anybody want to get along?’ We play king of the hill so much that we have what I call an Us vs. Them mentality and ‘Them’ is always the enemy and they need to be destroyed. The level of discourse is really disappointing and needs to be improved.”

The Nonpartisan Dignity Index

The Dignity Index seeks to improve the level of public discourse. It is a system of scoring speech on a 1–8 scale where level 1 represents contemptuous language and 8 represents language filled with dignity. The goal of the index is to make us more aware of the language we hear and therefore, the language we use. “When we are exposed to seeing contempt, we’ll use less of it,” Shriver says, adding, “We don’t hear the contempt in our own voice until it is pointed out to us,” but, “As soon as contempt is exposed, you want to use less of it.”

A recent report from *More in Common* found that “70% of Americans feel that they have a sense of responsibility to connect with people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from their own,” but feel they lack the opportunity to do so (“The Connection Opportunity: Insights for Bringing Americans Together Across Difference,” March 18, 2025). The Dignity Index seeks to help people connect across party lines because individuals treated with dignity are more likely to share their true feelings.

The aforementioned sayings, you’ll notice, don’t include “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.” That guidance has merit, but it’s not what the Dignity Index or Tim Shriver is going for. Too many people believe that speaking contemptuously or saying nothing at all are their only options. Shriver maintains that we can hold to our principles without disparaging others, or as Governor Spencer Cox says, we can “disagree better.” Overwhelmingly, Americans want to do better, “But it’s not being taught to us. It’s not being modeled to us. It’s not being shown in our institutions,” Shriver asserts.

The Dignity Index scores speech, not people or parties. Thus, the same individual’s speech can be scored high on the index or low on the index depending on the language they use on any given day. Similarly, the same core messages can be scored very differently depending on the language used to share the message. It doesn’t matter which political party the speech is coming from, only the manner of speech.

Shriver’s family has had a long line of Democrats in office, and he remains a firmly committed Democrat. But Republicans in deep red Utah support the same efforts. Governor Cox campaigns to “Disagree Better,” our own Governor Gary R. Herbert told Shriver in a panel discussion, “I reached out to the Democrats when I was governor. We met with them once a week. . . . [We asked them] ‘What’s on your minds? What are our goals?’ We have a lot in common. We have similar outcomes that are desired, we sometimes only differ on how we get there.” Slain MAGA Republican and political activist Charlie Kirk taught, “What is so important to our country is to find our disagreements, respectfully. When people stop talking, that’s when you get violence; that’s when civil war happens because you start to think the other side is so evil and they lose their humanity.” Obviously, speaking respectfully to those with whom we disagree is not a partisan issue.

“I’m convinced that men hate each other because they don’t know each other, and they don’t know each other because they don’t communicate with each other.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



Gary R. Herbert
17th Governor of Utah



Tami Pyfer
Chief Impact Officer
of the Dignity Index



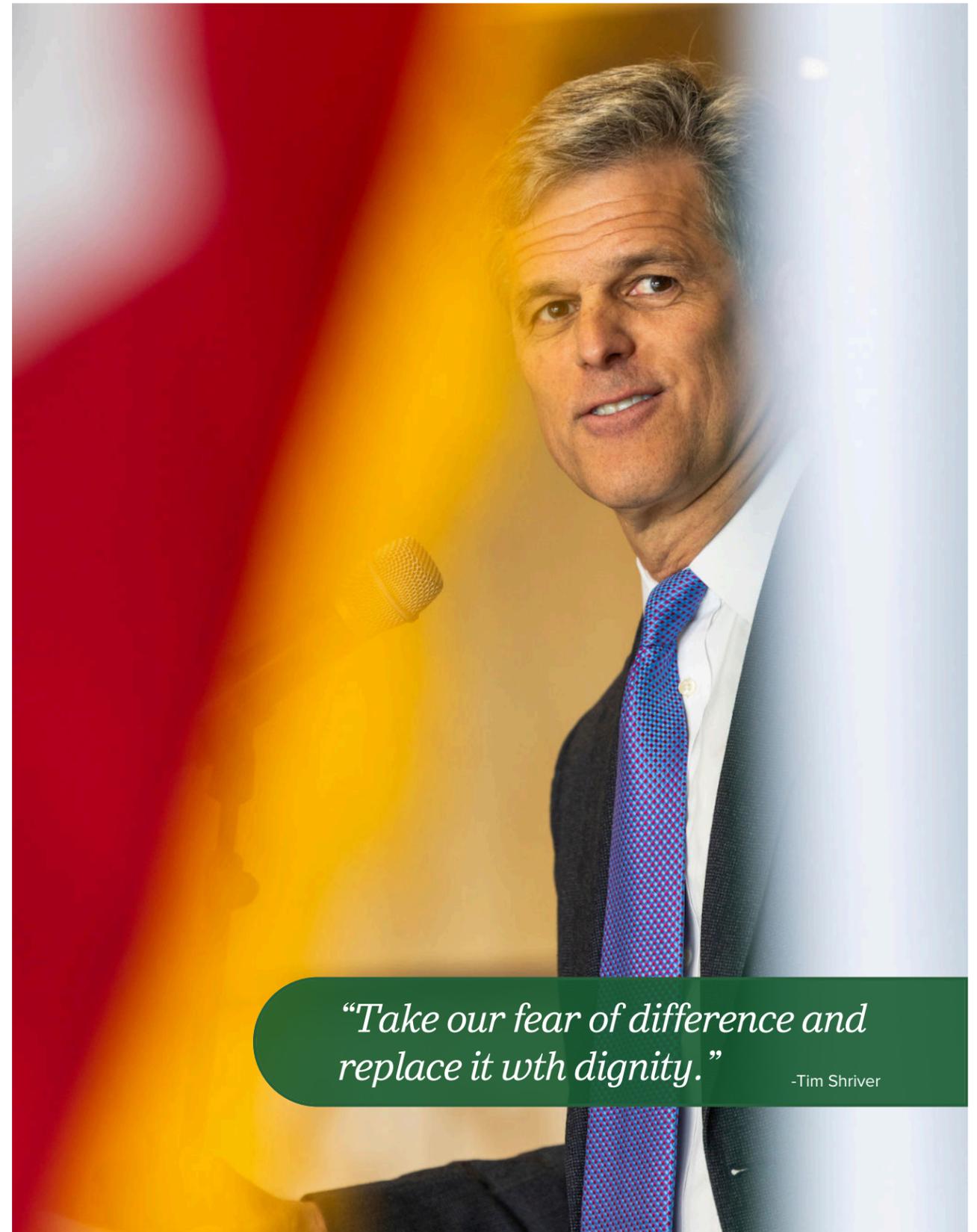
Tim Shriver
Co-Creator of the
Dignity Index

Redeveloping Trust

In 1963, when Shriver's uncle and the President of the United States was assassinated, it wasn't just the Democrats who mourned his death. To this day, most Americans who remember 1963 can tell you exactly where they were and what they were doing when they got the news. The nation mourned—Republicans and Democrats alike. Though many disagreed with his politics, they acknowledged his humanity and supported the office he held. If we want to get back to that level of respect, trust in each other, and hope

in the future, we have to do things differently than we are now. Shriver affirms, "If we're going to be hopeful about the future, we have to stop getting each other wrong. If we want to build a more hopeful future, we have to trust that the contempt we have for each other is false." The Herbert Institute agrees. As part of our mission, we defend free speech, support civil public discourse, and strive to build trust in the civic institutions that are the foundation of our democratic republic. ■

Speaking respectfully to those with whom we disagree is not a partisan issue.



"Take our fear of difference and replace it with dignity."

-Tim Shriver

Developing Future Leaders



Herbert Institute Assistants

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Brooklyne Andersen | Anthony Jankovic |
| Cade Bloomer | Nathan Jordan |
| Reese Boardman | Joshua Jorgensen |
| Curtis Bristol | Jonathan Kwong |
| Katelyn Carpenter | Louyoko Nianza |
| Sophia Clark | Eva McCullough |
| Noah Cliften | Nash Mendenhall |
| Emilee Cook | Canyon Moser |
| Kayla Cullimore | John Nelson |
| London Duffin | Daisy Nielson |
| Jay-Alexander Elliot | Wyatt Robinson |
| Michael Erickson | Bradley Smith |
| William Freedman | Addison Stott |
| Xander Greenwood | Kaytlin Stratton |
| Joshua Hadlock | Aaron Tracy |
| Jade Haymore | Rebecca Whyte |
| Jessica Hollingsworth | |
| Ethan Howlett | |



2025 Interns

United States Congress

- Kate Zander
- Delaney Moss
- Grace Wingate
- Vincent Meade

Defense Sector

- Hope Fager

Consulate of Spain, Los Angeles

- Parker Campbell

Governor's Office Research Analysts

- Parker Miller
- Cortland Fry

HERBERT SPOTLIGHTS



Brooklyne Andersen

Graphic Designer

As a graphic designer for the Herbert Institute, I have created graphics for the Data Governance Summit, various different speakers, as well as designed and laid out white papers for research interns, and more! My favorite part about working here is connecting with so many different teams—research, communications, events, etc. I have been able to get to know so many more people and understand their different roles so much better.

I am also interning for the Utah Jazz, but this role has taught me so much about informational graphic design and transforming complex political concepts into engaging visuals.



Jade Haymore

Events Assistant

I love the culture that the Herbert Institute has built with its mission and team. No matter what political affiliation, every faculty member and student works together to lead, gather, and trust. My favorite event was Senators Modeling Civility where we brought in two senators from differing political parties to have civil discussion; the days leading up to this event were chaos, which is where I thrive!

With the Herbert Institute, I have the opportunity to get involved with politics in a way that not only benefits my future career but also benefits my political understanding and engagement. I am so excited to help grow the Herbert Institute for the students and faculty at UVU!



Aaron Tracy

Research Assistant

As a political science major with an emphasis in public law and political philosophy and a minor in constitutional studies, I joined the Herbert Institute to promote student engagement in civics and government.

I interned with the National Federalism Initiative (NFI) working on the NFI Summit of States and Utah Executive Agency reports, but my favorite thing about the Herbert Institute is the people. My leaders [Troy Smith, Sheri Smederovac, and Jim Moss] and my fellow interns were all terrific to work with. My experience was wonderful and exactly what I needed to prepare me for law school in the fall. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity I had to work with the Herbert Institute.



Cade Bloomer *Herbert Institute, Research Assistant Alumnus*

I served as a student researcher and project lead with the Herbert Institute for Public Policy for the last three years. My work focused on state and federal policy research and civic engagement initiatives. I supported policy analysis, coordinated with legislators and partner organizations, helped plan and execute public forums and debates, and assisted with research tied to real-world legislative proposals. I loved seeing our research connect students directly with elected officials and practitioners and seeing ideas move from research papers to real conversations and policy.

Donor support enabled me to gain real-world experience, mentorship, and confidence before graduation and better prepared me to serve my community, state, and country. My experiences with the Herbert Institute taught me how to operate in fast-paced, high-responsibility environments, skills that directly translate to my career as an Army officer and in future public service roles.

Being the Herbert Institute's first commissioned Army officer is an honor I take seriously. The institute helped shape how I think about leadership, service, and public policy, and it played a meaningful role in preparing me for both military service and long-term civic leadership.



Alyssa Elizalde *Herbert Institute, Legislative Intern Alumna*

My career path was strongly shaped by my experience as a Gary R. Herbert legislative intern during the 2024 Utah General Session. I supported legislative operations through constituent communications, calendar and project management, bill tracking, and special initiatives. I am currently the Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator for The Children's Center Utah, a role I accepted immediately after graduating from UVU in 2024.

One of my favorite projects was developing my representative's weekly newsletter. This task combined storytelling, data tracking, and visual communication to highlight legislative priorities and constituent engagement. This experience strengthened my ability to communicate impact clearly and consistently—skills I now use to engage volunteers, community partners, and donors through outreach and marketing efforts in the nonprofit sector.

The internship also emphasized the importance of networking, professionalism, and integrity. Learning to build trust through reliability and discretion has been central to my work today. At The Children's Center Utah, I manage a comprehensive volunteer program, mentor student interns, support fundraising events, and collaborate on outreach campaigns. The skills I developed through the Herbert Institute—strategic communication, organization, and relationship-building—prepared me to step confidently into this role and make an immediate impact.

I am deeply grateful to the donors who made this internship possible. Your investment provided the clarity, confidence, and real-world preparation that continues to guide my work and allows me to serve my community with purpose.



Canyon Moser *Herbert Institute, Research Assistant Alumnus*

I started as a research assistant in Spring 2023 focusing on Utah's unique approach to managing its natural resources. This provided me, a future biology teacher, with opportunities to research and author academic white papers for publication which led to presenting my research to experts in my field at the 2024 Utah Lake Symposium.

These opportunities gave me robust additions to my resume, but the people at the Herbert Institute are what made the experience so meaningful. The institute's leadership team supports the belief that we can and should be civically engaged regardless of our school or career pursuits.

The Herbert Institute exists because of the generosity and vision of its donors. Thank you to our generous donors for believing in this work and in the students who carry it forward.

My experience at the Herbert Institute has equipped me to better understand how legislation is developed, interpreted, and implemented, and how those processes influence education systems where I will spend my career.

2025 LEGISLATIVE INTERNS



Daniela Aldama Joe Boyle Kimball Clements Justin Conder



Carter Darger Gabrielle Erickson Lucy Flandro Darian Hensel



Hailey Krogh Tanner Lung Delaney Moss Carli Oyler



Ashlyn Parker Alyxandra Rees Melanie Robe Addison Stott



Liam Thiess Grant Weeks Rebecca Whyte Emmalee Williams Henry Wolthius

Ambassador Jeff Flake

Leading with Soft Power

By: Becca Aylworth Wright, Communications Director

The seats filled, slowly at first, but as 10:00 a.m. drew nearer, each seat became occupied and several dozen more were pulled in from adjoining rooms until ultimately participants stood crowded along the back wall. Despite the cramped seating, students, staff, faculty, and community members warmly welcomed Ambassador Jeff Flake, former senator and representative in the United States Congress, who recently served as the United States ambassador to Turkey. His career as a politician and diplomat developed in him not only a profound belief in America's leadership but also a respect for its tenuousness.

Before the large crowd, Flake attested, "American leadership has never been inevitable. It has always been a choice. And when we choose engagement, generosity and reliability, we lead. When we choose disengagement, the world does not wait. It simply moves on without us." This engagement, this generosity and reliability, is often misunderstood as weakness. "In this era of alpha dominance, it's easy to forget the virtues of diplomacy. High-minded rhetoric and saber rattling may grab headlines, but it's often quiet diplomacy that resolves crises, builds alliances and maintains the peace." This is the value of soft power.

The Berlin Wall

While some question the effectiveness of soft power, the stories of its success speak for themselves, Flake attests. The use of hard power, "using force and coercion to get countries to act in a certain way," may have built the Berlin Wall, but soft power brought it down:

"The fall of the Berlin Wall is a perfect example of soft power in action. The US and NATO never stormed East Berlin. The Soviet army wasn't defeated in battle, and the Warsaw Pact wasn't dismantled by invasion. Instead,

soft power eroded the Soviet bloc from within. East Germans could see West German television. They compared the terrible East German car called the Trabi, a little two-cylinder car that sounded like a sewing machine going along, to Volkswagens. They compared their bread lines with the supermarkets just across the Berlin Wall; they compared censorship with free press. Every glimpse of jeans and jazz and democracy was a reminder that their system was failing, and no amount of propaganda could fully block that comparison."

The hostility of a post-nuclear world wasn't enough to convince the Eastern Bloc of democratic supremacy, but soft power effected changes when hard power could not.

Making Friends and Influencing People

"Soft power is shaping preferences and winning influence through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Tools of soft power include culture, values, diplomacy, and foreign aid, such as USAID," Flake states. This aid served as

a counterpart against apartheid for the people of Namibia. They had endured decades of "hard power" until they finally gained their independence from South Africa in 1990. Despite Namibia's leaders having gained their education in the Eastern and Soviets Blocs and in Cuba, "They weren't looking to consolidate power. They had seen the end of that movie," Flake quips. "What they wanted was separation of powers. They wanted an independent judiciary. They wanted meaningful protections for individual rights. They wanted their constitution patterned after ours. That was because of the soft power that we had exhibited." Shortly after Namibia gained its indepen-



"Soft power is strength under control. It is influence rooted in trust. It is leadership by example."

Jeff Flake



dence, the country's ambassador paid a visit to Salt Lake City, including to Welfare Square for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The ambassador noted the large bundle of used clothing, bailed up to be sent as a donation to the global South when he started to cry. His host asked if something was wrong, but the ambassador only said, "No, I just remember that's the only way I got my clothes growing up in a rural town in Namibia," Flake recounts him saying. In a very real way, it taught Flake that, "People don't only watch our military power, they watch our example. They watch our reliability and whether we keep our word."

The Dangers of Ditching Soft Power

Global leadership abhors a vacuum. If the United States abandons its role as a world leader in soft power, a list of other nations is queuing up to take its place; but they may have ulterior motives in mind. "Decisions are being made . . . sometimes without us in the room. Once those standards are set, they're tough to change. Sometimes it takes decades," Flake

aments. "If we aren't shaping the rules, we'll be forced to live under somebody else's rules."

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (so-called BRICS nations) are the first contenders to expand their cooperation and de-throne the United States as a global authority. The BRICS nations "offer trade infrastructure and influence, and unlike us, they aren't shy about re-writing the rules of the global system in their favor. [They] now talk openly of new financial structures, new alliances, even new standards for global governance," says Flake. The United States cannot afford for our allies to feel "slighted or lectured or even abandoned." Flake continues, "We too often treat them as afterthoughts and not as partners. This is dangerous."

Some claim that sending funds and aid to foreign countries is a waste of taxpayer dollars and not in the best interests of our citizens, but the proof is in many decades of international relations. From the Marshall Plan of World War II to decades of sending vaccines, medicines, food, clothing, and supplies to the Global South, American interests have been served by supporting our allies through soft power.

Moving Forward

To the amassed audience members in the Clarke Building, many of them students in political science and national security studies, Ambassador Flake left these words: "You're going to inherit this political world. You will live with consequences of whether America chooses to lead or retreat. I hope that you have a role in shaping it." Regardless of their areas of study, UVU students will represent the United States to the world. What do they want the world to see?

Flake concludes, "Let's never confuse diplomacy with weakness. Let's not mistake soft power for softness. Soft power is strength under control. It is influence rooted in trust. It is leadership by example. The world will not wait. And the question is, will America [and the young people who represent it] continue to step forward?"

The Herbert Institute has every confidence they will. ■





Dr. Ben Carson: Turning Pain into Purpose



By: Becca Aylworth Wright, Communications Director

As a former US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, United States presidential candidate, and world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon, Dr. Ben Carson draws a crowd everywhere he goes. But less than two months after the tragic assassination of Charlie Kirk at Utah Valley University (UVU), Dr. Carson's lecture left standing room only. Hundreds gathered to feel his calm demeanor and hear his peace-promoting message.

Courageous and Peaceful

Despite being on the Herbert Institute for Public Policy's schedule to speak for several months already, some speculated that after the high-profile shooting in September, Dr. Carson wouldn't want to come to UVU. But "Fear is not a part of my vocabulary," Dr. Carson states.

"Everyone will probably remember where they were and what they were doing on September 10 when Charlie Kirk was shot," Dr. Carson recalls, "I couldn't even speak." He acknowledges the anguish, grief, and anger that accompany such traumatic events. Through his own experience with trauma, Dr. Carson has learned to navigate anger and strife.

As a youth, Ben Carson's demeanor was far from the placid, peaceful dignity he's known for now. Many have asked Dr.

"Fear is not a part of my vocabulary."

Dr. Ben Carson

Carson why he doesn't get upset? Why doesn't he get angry? He posits, "I wasn't always like that. There was a time I got very angry." In fact, Dr. Carson was a violently angry youth.

Carson's Violent Youth

In response to being hit by a painless pebble, young Ben Carson retrieved a large rock and threw it at his assailant's face. The rock broke the boy's glasses, but they were both incredibly lucky it hadn't additionally broken his skull.

When a classmate held open Ben's locker while he wanted it closed, Ben, holding the lock in his hand, punched the other boy in the face. The force of the punch and the lock tore open a three-inch gash in the young man's forehead.

Even Ben's beloved mother was not exempt from his violent outbursts. She worked two to three jobs to keep her two sons housed, clothed, and fed, but there was never enough for the stylish clothes Ben preferred. When she tried to get him to wear the pants he deemed unworthy, he took a hammer and attempted to strike her with it. Fortunately, his older brother caught the hammer from behind and prevented the attack.

Finally, at age fourteen, a companion angered young Ben and in response, he thrust a large camping knife into the young man's abdomen. The knife struck the boy's large belt buckle hidden under his shirt. Seemingly by Providence alone, each of Ben's would-be victims was spared the life-threatening injury his actions could have caused. When he realized how close he was to murdering his own friend, he knew he needed to change.

Making a Change

Young Ben locked himself in a bathroom, alone with a Bible and his faith. He prayed for God's strength to overcome his temper. He had tried many times before, but he felt powerless to his rage. In that small room, he felt divine guidance opening his eyes to the truth. He had long felt that God had preserved him to do something special with his life, but he knew he could never be what God intended if he continued on in violence. He realized that his violence was perpetuated by self-serving behavior. When all his thought patterns revolved around himself, he was violent. When he started considering others, the angry violence stopped immediately. Since that day in the bathroom, Dr. Carson has never again had an angry or violent outburst. Some have accused him of simply "covering up" his anger—hiding it until no one is looking. But Dr. Carson asserts otherwise. "When God fixes a problem, He doesn't do a paint job; He fixes it from the inside." His commitment to becoming who God wanted him to be changed more than his behavior; it changed his heart forever.

Managing Mindset When Grief Hits

After Dr. Carson's unique talents in pediatric neurosurgery rose in prominence, he was requested to perform a surgery on conjoined twins in South Africa. Their circumstances looked similar to a successful case Dr. Carson had treated in Germany. In all the world, Dr. Carson was the man for the job. The notoriety of the South Africa case brought many equipment donations and provided opportunities for the local hospital and its healthcare providers to be trained and prepared in ways never made possible before. When the day for surgery came, Carson's team approached the surgery exactly as they had previously in Germany. Unfortunately, the outcome was not the same. With one twin having the only functioning heart, and the other twin having the only functioning kidneys, despite a successful cranial separation, neither could live independently of the other, and both twins died.

Dr. Carson was devastated.

If losing both babies was to be the outcome, then what was the point of all their preparations? All the donations? All the trainings? "I didn't need to come over here to fail; anyone could have failed," recalls Dr. Carson. Once again, Dr. Carson discovered he was letting selfishness corrode his thinking. This wasn't the right attitude. "The right attitude would be to take the opportunity to manifest the glory of God," he adds.

Two years later, uniquely conjoined twins in Zambia needed a miracle. They were conjoined at the head, each facing opposite directions. Thirteen previous attempts to separate this type of twins had all failed. The donated equipment, the trained providers, and all the preparation from South Africa had a new chance. The twins from Zambia were taken to the previous location in South Africa.

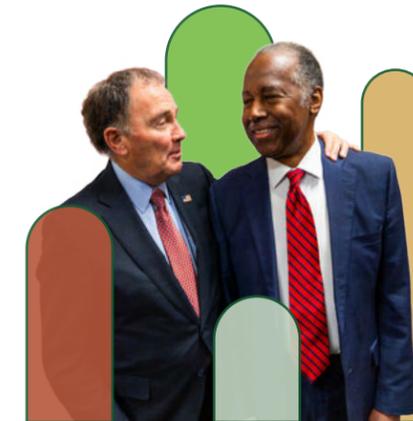
Three quarters of the way through the surgery, Dr. Carson was tapped out. "Lord, I have reached my limit," he prayed. "I can't do any more. It's going to be You, or they're going to die." He can't even remember the remaining hours of surgery. After twenty-eight hours, it was finally complete. But this time, it went exactly as they hoped. Within three days, they were eating, within two weeks they are crawling, and today, both twins are perfectly healthy adults.



None of it could have happened without the previous, tragic case. From devastation, a miracle became possible. "Sometimes when things happen and we blame God, we say, 'Why didn't [the desired outcome] happen?'" Dr. Carson prompts. "Maybe it's because He can see the end from the beginning. Maybe He can see how a failure here sets you up for a success there." Maybe suffering now can serve a purpose in the future.

Learning from Loss

Whether or not listeners agreed with Charlie Kirk's views, his assassination is a painful indication of the state of political discourse in the United States. When we "cancel" each other instead of love each other, we're missing opportunities to improve from each other. "We don't have to believe the same thing," Dr. Carson asserts. "In fact, if two people believe the same thing about everything, one of them isn't necessary—but everyone is necessary. We just need to learn how to talk to each other." From the personal wounds each member of the UVU campus community has after September 10, 2025, Dr. Carson invites us to heal and rise to a greater height.



"Are we going to proclaim hatred and division and a desire to get rid of the people who disagree with us—to obliterate them so that only our opinion can be right? Or are we going to say, let's sit down and reason together? Let's recognize that we are one nation, and we can only be strong if we work together."

The most politically disparate individuals in this country would still agree on 80% of the issues, Dr. Carson reports. "It's the 20% we don't agree on that we have allowed to be massaged into a template

of hatred and division," he states. The United States is well defended against foreign attacks, but it is not impervious to threats from within. "We cannot be overcome militarily, but we can be overcome internally." If we "start with the 80% of things we agree on, [we can] establish a relationship, and then we can talk about our differences and why we feel the way we do."

United We Stand

"Our nation is unique because our founding document says that our rights come from our Creator, not our government," Dr. Carson states. But this truth we hold self-evident doesn't only apply to people who agree with us. To survive and to succeed as a nation, we need "to recognize the rights of each other. That's what will save us." In pursuit of our own freedoms, we must safeguard each other's freedoms. Dr. Carson's hope for America is in recognizing and remembering that we are the United States of America.

Dr. Carson asserts, "Our strength lies in our unity." Though we have our differences, we remain "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." ■



"Let's recognize that we are one nation, and we can only be strong if we work together." Dr. Ben Carson



Karen McCandless
Orem Mayor

Elections Debates

The Herbert Institute for Public Policy partnered with UVUSA to host Orem City Council and mayoral debates on October 8, beginning with a "Meet the Candidates" tabling event. Attendees met with candidates, submitted questions, and gained deeper insight into the issues shaping Orem's future.

Additionally, the Herbert Institute received \$600,000 in 2025 to promote fair, nonpartisan debates for state and federal elections, educate voters by providing direct access to candidate debates, and encourage civic engagement and informed voting.



Curtis Blair
President,
Utah Valley Chamber

Legislative Wrap-Up

The 2025 Legislative Wrap Up event brought together 280 attendees for an engaging review of the Utah legislative session, hosted in partnership by the Gary R. Herbert Institute for Public Policy and the Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce. Featuring Speaker of the House Mike Schultz alongside Representatives Val Peterson and Stephanie Gricius, the discussion offered key insights and priorities from the 2025 session. The event encouraged civic engagement through open audience discussion.



2025 Orem City
Council Candidates



Mike
Schultz
Utah
Speaker of
the House



Rep. Val
Peterson
Utah House
District 56



Rep. Stephanie
Gricius
Utah House
District 50

The State-Endorsed Digital Identity Summit

Protecting & Securing Personal Identity

By Becca Aylworth Wright, Communications Director

The battle between freedom and security has waged for centuries. How much of one of these core principles do we give up in favor of the other? Our quest to verify authenticity and identity has gone on just as long. State-endorsed digital identity (SEDI) seeks to balance each of these needs with an approach that protects privacy while verifying identity. Utah's Chief Privacy Officer, Christopher Bramwell, is at the forefront of the state's approach to digital identity. He has observed the holes in our current analog approach and other states' digital approaches through mobile driver licenses (MDLs), and he is working on a novel approach to resolve these issues.

Protecting the Vulnerable

Without a secure means of verifying identity, we put some of society's most vulnerable populations at risk. "I'm concerned," Bramwell says, "for [our] kids who can engage online and on video games and social media, and they do not know if the people they are engaging with are actually who they say they are. I am concerned

for [our] elderly parents and grandparents who continue to be taken advantage of by individuals pretending to be family members in distress. I am concerned for young men facing exploitation and sextortion online . . . being driven to despair and even suicide in a world where anonymity and manipulation coexist without protection."

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on how vulnerable our government is to widespread financial fraud "costing the United States hundreds of billions of dollars a year."

Digital Identity without Surveillance

Bramwell also describes government-sponsored digital identity systems that are capable of tracking, surveilling, and controlling individuals. "I am most concerned," he says, "that in democracies around the world, digital identity systems are being designed and implemented in ways contrary to the first principles of America's founding—that individuals have inalienable rights—including identity."

Your Identity Belongs to You

Bramwell is not blind to the fears of a digital identity system, many of them well founded. This is part of why he isn't interested in an identity system granted to citizens by the government. "Government does not give identity. Government does not create identity. And any identity system built on the premise that government is giving it to you means that they can also take it away, which is in opposition to this founding principle."

Many of the other systems around the world have failed because they haven't accounted for the interests of each group and individual, wherever they fall on the security–freedom continuum.

SEDI is different.

Bramwell has combined groups whose beliefs are frequently at odds—such as

Libertas Network and the ACLU—to develop SEDI to ensure it protects privacy while ensuring freedom from surveillance and tracking. In putting together groups with differing interests, Bramwell and his team are addressing the concerns of digital identity on every side. Their collaboration is creating unique legislation and outcomes set apart from anything else like it in the world.

SEDI Is Unique

Christopher Bramwell and his team are committed to making SEDI different in the following ways:

Your identity belongs to you, not to the government. Your identity is yours by birthright. Government can neither bestow it nor take it away. Government can, in some circumstances, endorse that identity to reaffirm to others that you are who you say you are.

Privacy is the design and the default. Although endorsed by the state, the state has no ability to track if or where you've opened your digital wallet to track or surveil you in any way.

SEDI provides selective disclosure. Driver licenses, for instance, maybe be able to verify age for rental car agreements or alcohol sales, but there is no reason for vendors or others to know full birthdates, skin, hair or eye color, or home addresses. With SEDI, the individual determines exactly which identifying factors he or she wants to share, and the rest remains undisclosed.

Even if your personal information is leaked, it can't be used against you because your uniquely cryptographically endorsed identity would have to sanction the use of your information before it could be authorized. With SEDI, you could post your

With SEDI, you could post your social security number to your social media, and no harm would come of it unless you yourself authorized it.

social security number to your social media, and no harm would come of it unless you yourself authorized it. SEDI ensures that the individuals and organizations are indeed who they claim to be. Catphishing would become a thing of the past. This protects people from fraud, scams, trafficking, grooming, sextortion, and other dangerous practices.

Utah Legislators Leading Out

In a panel of Utah state senators and representatives at the SEDI Summit, Representative Kristen Chevrier admits that she didn't see supporting SEDI as likely—at first. "I had somebody on Facebook this morning say to me that 'having you endorse digital identity was not on my bingo card.' It wasn't on mine either. But here I am because I believe that this is the right system, and I believe that we

Why SEDI Matters

With state-endorsed digital identity, catphishing could become a thing of the past. Parents like Cindy George think changes to secure online identity can't come soon enough. George's son died by suicide following sextortion and unbearable harassment from con artists overseas.



Cindy George
Parent Advocate

either have to choose a system that is going to respect privacy, or we're going to get the other one," she says.

Representative Paul Cutler agrees: "History shows us that fighting technology advancement is often a futile effort . . . Digital identity is coming . . . Do we want to influence the standards and the adoption of this to protect freedom and individual liberties, or will we acquiesce to efficiency and monetization?"

Utah is the very tip of the spear on privacy-protected, state-endorsed digital identity. Being innovative matters but getting it right matters even more. In a partnership across political lines and in a variety of backgrounds, the Utah Office of Data Privacy, the Utah Legislature, and the Herbert Institute are making sure we do. Representative Chevrier reassures, "Nobody that we've talked to, that I'm aware of, has been opposed to this once they understood it. I think the key is educating people on what it is we're trying to do, and what the stakes are, and the stakes are very high. For future generations, let's work together and let's get this done." ■



Rep. Paul Cutler
Utah House
District 18

Alan Fuller
Utah's Chief
Information Officer

Christopher Bramwell
Utah's Chief
Privacy Officer

The Herbert Institute's

Apartments in Washington, DC

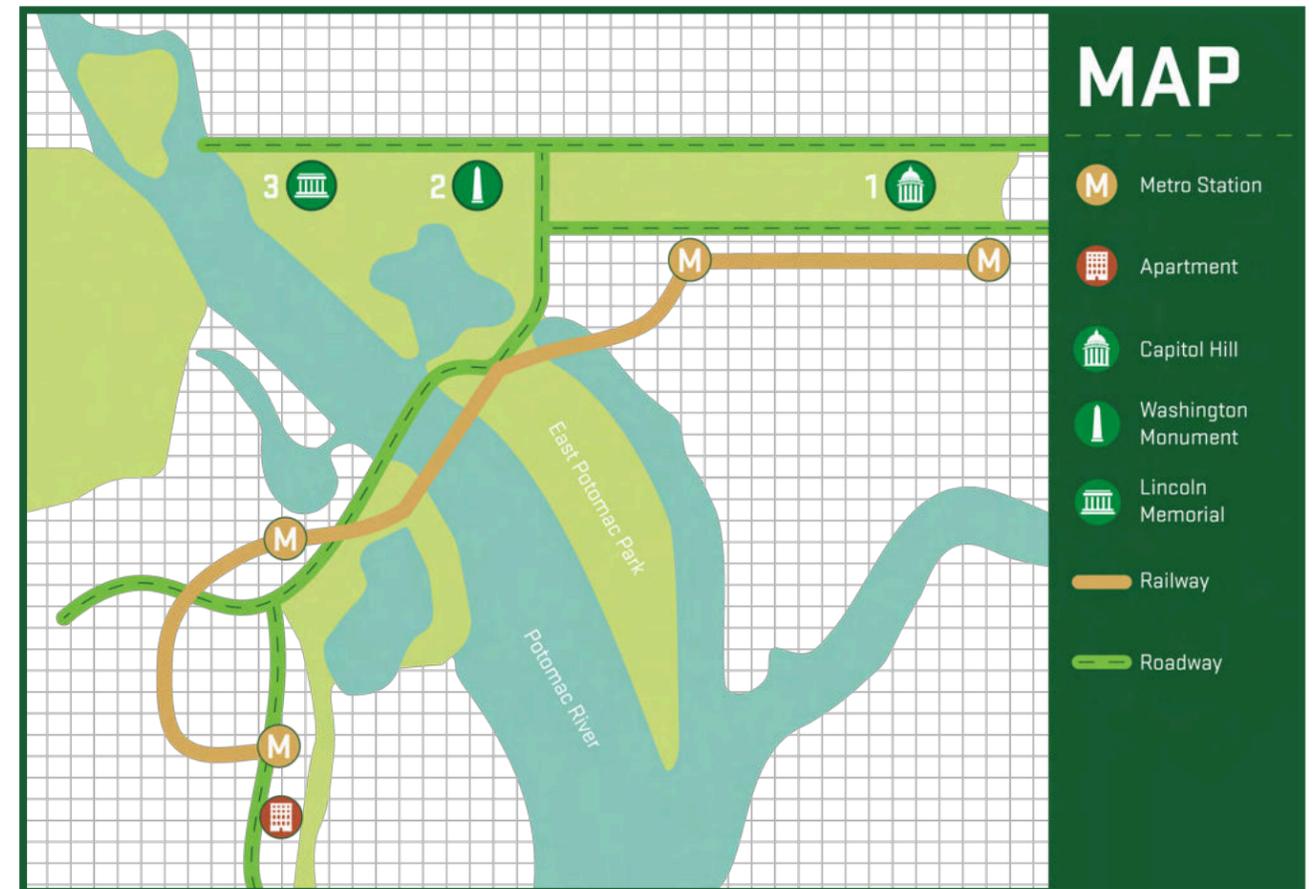
The Herbert Institute offers Washington, DC housing to support students completing internships and workplace learning opportunities. These furnished apartments are located near the Metro Blue Line, providing a simple, one-line commute to the US Capitol.

The secured building includes a front-desk concierge, offering added safety and reliability. Separate male and female apartments feature furnished living spaces, full bathrooms, in-unit washers and dryers, and included internet. This housing supports the institute's mission

by removing barriers so more of our students can enter public service fields and develop as the next generation of civic leaders. 🏡



3 Steps Away
7 min walk to the nearest Metro station, and only 3 steps more to the Capitol Building



On The Air

The Herbert Institute Creates New Podcast

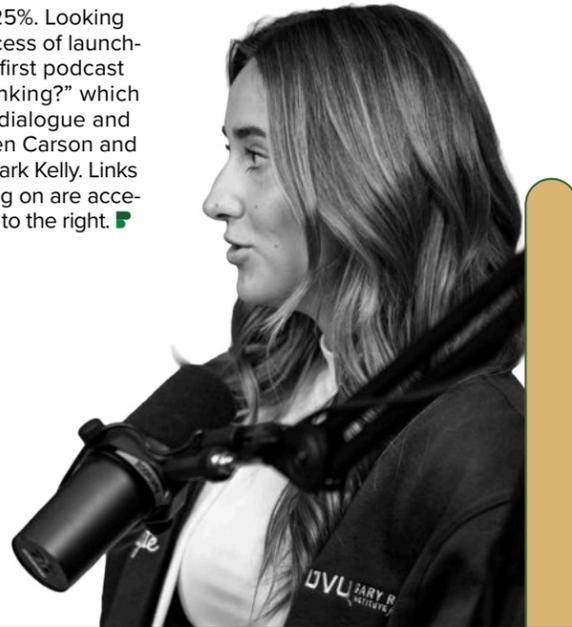
Social media has remained an important channel for inviting members of our community to engage with the Herbert Institute. All that we do regarding events, student impact, policy research, and more are showcased on our platforms. In the last year we have emphasized our presence on Instagram where we were able to increase our followers by 142% and tripled the amount we were uploading. With specific initiatives such as event recaps and an engagement

series, we were also able to increase our average video views by 625%. Looking forward, we are in the process of launching the Herbert Institute's first podcast titled "What Are They Thinking?" which promotes respectful civic dialogue and features guests such as Ben Carson and Senators John Curtis and Mark Kelly. Links to everything we have going on are accessible through the QR code to the right. ■



Daisy Nielson
Social Media Assistant

Gov. Scott Walker
Former Governor of Wisconsin



Rebecca Whyte
Communications Assistant



John Curtis
US Senator (R-UT)

Mark Kelly
US Senator (D-AZ)

Stay Connected

Follow the Herbert Institute on Instagram, X, and Facebook.

Find our podcast "What Are They Thinking?" on YouTube and Spotify.



Jeff Burningham
Entrepreneur

Ambassador
Jeff Flake



Senators Modeling Civility: A Conversation America Needed



By Rebecca Whyte, Communications Assistant

In November 2025, the Herbert Institute was honored to welcome Senator John Curtis (R-UT) and Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ) to Utah Valley University for a bipartisan conversation on political violence, polarization, and the future of civic trust in America. Moderated by CNN's Dana Bash, the discussion took place nearly two months after the tragic assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk—an event that profoundly affected the UVU community and underscored the urgency of restoring civil discourse in public life.

Against a backdrop of grief, division, and national uncertainty, the evening offered something increasingly rare—a visible, intentional model of principled disagreement grounded in mutual respect.

On stage with Dana Bash, Senators Curtis and Kelly brought distinct political pers-

pectives—and a shared commitment to democratic norms. Senator Curtis, a life-long Utahn and former mayor, has built his public service around collaboration, community engagement, and pragmatic problem-solving. Senator Kelly, a former astronaut and Navy combat pilot, has long spoken about the human consequences of political violence, shaped in part by the 2011 shooting that nearly claimed the life of his wife, former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.

In the wake of the Charlie Kirk assassination, Senator Curtis reached out to

Senator Kelly with a simple but powerful idea: come together publicly, in the community most affected, to demonstrate that disagreement need not devolve into dehumanization.

That decision aligned directly with the Herbert Institute's mission—to develop principled policy leaders, convene civil dialogue, and strengthen trust in the institutions that uphold our democratic republic. Framed by that mission, the event offered a clear example of how intentional bipartisan engagement can advance the foundational civic values.

CNN News Anchor Dana Bash moderates Senator discussion at UVU's NOORDA Center.

Student Focused, Institute Supported

Before taking the main stage, the Senators requested a private meeting with students who had been directly affected by the tragedy. There were no cameras and no press, only an open, honest conversation.

For students, this was a rare opportunity to engage not with political caricatures, but with human beings willing to listen. Anchored in the Herbert Institute's commitment to supporting students as emerging policy leaders, the moment illustrated how bipartisan engagement can empower young people to practice—and eventually lead—constructive civic participation.

One student expressed her admiration for the examples Senators Curtis and Kelly were setting for them. "I'm impressed with you guys. You're so kind to each other and respectful to each other. And I applaud you for that. We all applaud you for that." Wanting guidance moving forward she asked, "What action items do you have for us to get involved?"

Senator Kelly's down-to-earth advice started simply. "The first thing is to get registered to vote," but then he challenged her to take it a step further. "Then help somebody get elected or run for office yourself."

Senator Curtis agreed. "Find somebody you believe in and really put your heart into that campaign. You will change

yourself. You will find new friends. You will understand policies better. And if that person is actually elected in the office, you'll feel like you have somebody you're connected with."

The senators were equally impressed with our Wolverines. "Stay engaged, please. Please, don't check out," Senator Kelly implored. "We need people that are smart and passionate and hardworking to replace us, to try to get this country back on track."

Modeling Civility

Later, for a wider audience, CNN's Dana Bash set a deliberate tone with the senators; serious without being sensational, probing without being partisan.

She asked what many audience members were likely already wondering, "What practical step can citizens take in our homes and communities to turn down the temperature of political rhetoric and rebuild trust so that disagreement doesn't lead to division or violence?"

Senator Kelly answered with a call for empathy. "We've got to look for opportunities to try to understand people's positions and not just disagree. Even if you disagree, you don't put a wall up. You try to find common ground on the things we can work together on to move the country forward."

When Bash followed up by asking how the nation can resist radicalization and avoid viewing politics as an "in-group versus out-group" struggle, Kelly drew



Dana Bash
CNN News

Astrid S. Tuminez, PhD
UVU President

attention to the moment in front of them.

"By being here and having this conversation—that's a step. Any individual can do this."

Then, scanning the crowd, Kelly pointed to a man wearing a "47" hat, unmistakably signaling his political stance. Instead of snapping or provoking, he smiled. "It doesn't bother me. I hope he has a question later. I'd love to take a picture with him. I'm sure he and I have a lot in common."



Meeting Students

Prior to the CNN-moderated discussion, Sen. Mark Kelly (AZ) and Sen. John Curtis (UT) met with a handful of UVU students. Kelly nurtured healing in their hearts after sharing the vulnerable story of the attempted assassination of his wife in 2011.



The exchange captured the event's intent; civility shown through action rather than sermon.

Moments of agreement were frequent and instructive. Both senators acknowledged the role social media algorithms play in amplifying outrage and discussed a bipartisan bill to address that challenge.

When Bash asked whether Washington has enough bipartisanship to pass meaningful reform, Kelly replied simply, "I've always been an optimist." Curtis followed, "We're starting a conversation that's been hidden. This won't happen overnight, but people need to add their wisdom to this bill."

Their Message to the Nation

As the conversation turned explicitly to political violence, Bash observed that the problem appears to be worsening. Curtis responded with reflection rather than deflection, "I think it's really time for us to step back and look at ourselves. This culture of contempt—assuming that if we disagree, you're a bad person—that [culture] fosters violence." He continued, "In a perfect world, this would be top-down and bottom-up. Leaders in Washington would model it, and families would teach it at home.

His conclusion was direct, "The only way I know to start is to look in the mirror every morning and say, 'I'm going to do my part.'"

Bash noted that many Americans are unaware of genuine friendships across the political aisle in the Senate. Kelly agreed, "Most people think we hate each other. But that's not true. We find one thing we can work on together to move the country in the right direction—and that's true for all 100 of us."

Curtis added, with humor, "We bear an affliction: when we get along, it's boring. Bipartisanship doesn't make the news."



Mark Kelly
US Senator (D-AZ)

As Kelly noted, "Anybody in a position like ours should be looking for opportunities to unite us and bring us together—not further divide us."

Building a Culture of Civic Dialogue

In reflecting on the assassination of Charlie Kirk, Senator Kelly reinforced a central commitment of our constitutional system, "I would go to war to fight for his right to say what he believes, and I have." His words affirmed that the appropriate response to political violence is not silence or retribution, but a renewed commitment to constitutional freedoms and democratic norms.

This bipartisan conversation directly reflected that mission in action. The event created space not only for disagreement, but for listening, modeling the kind of civic culture that allows pluralistic societies to endure. ■

Academic Papers

Conducted in 2025

1. The Current State of Data Governance in Utah: Balancing Privacy, Data, and Use

In preparation for the 2025 Utah Legislative Session, this paper discusses Utah State's need to keep constituent data secure, transparent, and usable and the risks of continuing without a more robust policy for data governance.

2. State-Endorsed Digital Identity

As a companion to the State-Endorsed Digital Identity Summit, this paper reviews the evolution of identity credentials and the future of digital identity.

3. Policy Brief: A Unified Model for Data Governance in Utah

This policy brief is a call to action for policymakers and officials across Utah to create a responsible system for data governance.

4. A Unified Model for Data Governance in Utah

While the above paper hits the highlights, this paper goes into greater depth to address the need for a more robust, comprehensive model for data governance in Utah.

5. Inconsistent Privacy Practices within Utah Counties Lead to Disclosure of Veteran Disability Status

This paper is a case study in Utah counties' inconsistent privacy practices that leave already vulnerable populations' sensitive data exposed. It recommends a robust, uniform system of regulations to remove the inconsistencies between counties.

6. A Comparison of States' Efforts Toward Governing Citizens' Personal Data

Only nineteen states have enacted consumer data privacy laws. Utah is leading the way in creating government checkpoints to secure not only privacy but transparency in the data collected by state governments.

7. The One Big Beautiful Bill and Its Implications for Utah's AI Policy

This white paper addresses how the One Big Beautiful Bill, in its original form, would have impacted Utah's policies on artificial intelligence, shining a light on the need for improved AI policies in the state and nationwide.

8. From Tradition to Policy: The Evolution and Impact of Hunting Licenses in Utah

Utah has a long history of hunting for food, sport, and important cultural traditions. The financial impact of hunting revenue supports many of the state's conservation efforts.

9. Healing Utah's Watersheds: How Politics, Partnerships, and Policy Shape Restoration

The Watershed Restoration Initiative is groundbreaking in its approach and is a benchmark of how putting policy over partisan politics yields powerful results in conservation.

10. Increased Error Rates in RCV and the Impact on Election Outcomes

This research update addresses concerns critics have raised regarding the number of ballots that are discarded with ranked choice voting (RCV).



William Freedman,
Research Assistant
(Left)



Kaitlyn Stratton,
Project Management Assistant and
Dr. George Rudolph, Faculty Fellow
(Right)

Bradley Smith and Reese Boardman,
Research Assistants
(Below)



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and New Team Members



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Business Stats./Strat. Mgmt.



Tara B. B. Bishop, PhD
Earth Science / Enviro. Mgmt.



Majid Memari, PhD
Computer Science



Jonathan Barton
Operations Manager



Alan Parry, PhD
Mathematics



George Rudolph, PhD
Computer Science



Sarah Bateman, MS
Strategic Relations Program Mngr.



David Connelly, PhD
Research Director



Jakell Larson, JD
DC Apartment RA



Jim Moss, EdD, JD
Constitutional Federalism Liaison



Troy Smith, PhD
Dir. Constitutional Federalism Initiative

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Director,
Gary & Jeanette Herbert Foundation

Constitutional Federalism

By Jim Moss, EdD, JD, Constitutional Federalism Liaison

In 2025, the Utah Legislature expanded the Herbert Institute's role by passing HB 488 which created the Constitutional Federalism Initiative in a partnership with the Center for Constitutional Studies (CCS).

The Herbert Institute's role is to be a liaison between the Federalism Commission, CCS, and agencies in the state. The institute will also research state agency issues related to federalism, conduct outreach, and coordinate and support the commission's local and national outreach efforts. A report of these findings will be shared with the Federalism Commission. The Herbert Institute has also taken the

lead in developing an assessment for state agencies to review constitutional lines of authority and determine their inter-governmental relations or the relationship between federal and state agencies. The Herbert team is preparing academic white papers on those findings. Curriculum is being prepared to conduct federalism training for state legislators and agency officials with a full launch targeted for May 30, 2026. Additional consultation with state leaders on potential action will follow.

The first annual federalism conference was hosted with representatives from fourteen states. This annual summit deep-

ened the nationwide conversation on federalism and further supported HB 488's mission of studying a state-led national organization on federalism. The research team and Research Director, David Connelly, work closely with Jim Moss, Professional-in-Residence and Constitutional Federalism Liaison, and with Troy Smith, Director of the Constitutional Federalism Initiative, to provide briefings and written reports to Federalism Commission leadership.

The institute is honored to partner with CCS in support of constitutional federalism in Utah and looks forward to continued collaboration. **F**



David Connelly, PhD
Research Director



Louyoko Nianza,
Research Assistant



Kayla Cullimore,
Research Assistant



Troy Smith, PhD
Director,
Constitutional
Federalism
Initiative



Federalism Summit

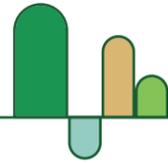
The Snowbird Resort in Salt Lake City, Utah, hosted the 2025 Federalism Summit. Leaders and student researchers from UVU's Center for Constitutional Studies and Herbert Institute for Public Policy represented Utah Valley University in late September.

Jim Moss, EdD, JD
Constitutional
Federalism Liaison



Rep. Jefferson Burton
Utah House District 64

Herbert Reflections



Governor Gary R. Herbert has long described himself as being “conservative in principle, moderate in tone, and inclusive in process.” But Governor Herbert doesn’t just talk the talk; he lives by these wise words. When he took office as the governor in August 2009 during the depths of the Great Recession with the unemployment rate in Utah topping eight percent, he knew that a key component for resolving this for the rising generation was for them to obtain a solid education. “You want to have skilled labor that aligns with the demands of the marketplace,” he recalls.

At the time, Utah’s student scores in reading and math were in the middle of pack among states. For the future of Utah’s economic prosperity, he knew we needed a well-educated workforce.

Working to invest in education to achieve important milestones, he ran into push-back from Utah Education Association (UEA), a key partner in helping achieve the goals his administration had set.

Instead of battling the UEA in the press, Governor Herbert decided to do something no other governor had done: go to UEA’s office and join their board meeting. As he walked into his first association meeting, the officers and board members were shocked to see him. Some were skeptical of his motives or what agenda he brought for public school funding. Through his inclusive process, their skepticism gave way to appreciation when they saw that he lived his own values. He frequently said, “Republicans or Democrats—members of the UEA or not—may disagree on which path we take, but I know we all want the same destination—a quality education for Utah’s children.”

Not only did Governor Herbert show up, he listened to all of their ideas no matter what camp they came from. “They all have their different ways of getting there, and maybe it’s a combination of both that gets us to the promised land,” Governor Herbert says.

Regular sit-downs between the governor and the UEA began to tear down silos and create solutions. Both groups’ needs were heard and validated. The association wanted better funding for teacher salaries, smaller class sizes, and more appreciation. Everyone wanted lower unemployment. “They got \$2 billion of ongoing money during my nearly twelve years as governor, and another \$2 billion in the last five years,” Governor Herbert states. And despite being in the throes of a global pandemic when Governor Herbert left office, unemployment in Utah had dropped to 3.4%.

Governor Herbert’s powerful leadership was critical to these successes. He went back to the UEA meetings again and

again, and then he “went out to the schools—high school, junior high, and elementary.” Governor Herbert visited principals but also teachers and staff to express appreciation for their work for Utah’s kids. “They knew that I cared, and I do care. I did care, and I still do,” Governor Herbert states.

Whether meeting needs in public schools or in any other endeavor, Governor Herbert’s philosophy shines through: “When we work together to find the proverbial common ground, we get a win-win. Let’s see what we can do together to advance that football down the field.”



Designed by: Londa Duffin, Graphic Design Assistant

INSPIRING
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

UVU GARY R. HERBERT
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC POLICY

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