



Tuesday, December 8th, 2020

The Honorable Governor Gary R. Herbert

With your time serving as Governor approaching its completion, the Salt Lake Chamber and the business community of our state wish to offer our deepest gratitude for your service and leadership. A letter such as this is far insufficient to adequately thank you for what you've done for Utah. Nevertheless, we offer the following commemoration of your 11 years as Governor of the Great State of Utah.

Utah's story, thanks in large part to your leadership, is one of overcoming challenging circumstances to create a place where families, communities, and businesses can thrive. When you took office in 2009, Utah—along with the rest of the nation—was reeling from the brutal effects of the Great Recession. Unemployment rates skyrocketed while job growth plummeted. Demand for government resources expanded while public resources dwindled. But great challenges create great opportunities. You reminded Utahns of the state's pioneer heritage, showing us that we were still a people who can build a future that "blossoms like a rose" no matter the temporary setback.

Three pillars of your administration stand out as laudable accomplishments that you should be extremely proud of: growing the economy with plentiful, diverse jobs for Utahns; improving the efficiency of state government through wise management; and, investing in our future by bolstering education.

Mobilizing your administration to foster an environment of business success and job creation, you took bold steps forward, such as your 2012 call to create 100,000 jobs in 1,000 days. Just two and a half years later, Utah *exceeded* that goal, creating 112,200 new jobs during that time, all the while bringing the unemployment rate down from 8.4% to 5.8% during that same period.

State government efficiency has soared under your watch, with faster turnaround times for business applications, shorter determination periods for Utahns in need applying for public assistance benefits, and much more—all while reducing the ratio of state employees to state residents.

Each year, you have highlighted education as the number one budgetary priority for the state. Thanks to your leadership, 87% of high school students now graduate, an increase of 11 percentage points from when you became Governor. And as a state we've invested an additional \$1 billion in new ongoing funding into public education.

Your accomplishments as Governor of Utah exceed the capacity of a simple letter, yet they are worth noting nonetheless. At the start of your final year in office, Utah's unemployment rate was an astonishingly low 2.5%. Job growth had consistently been so strong for so long, that one of our greatest economic challenges was insufficient workers to fill the open jobs. These facts, in context of a great return to economic strength in the decade following the Great Recession, must be an integral part of your legacy.

Now, we find ourselves yet again in a time of great challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic effects have dealt another severe blow to Utah, and there will be need for more great and courageous efforts from Utah's next generation of leaders. But even amidst this time of difficulty, Utah has stronger footing than the rest of the nation. Our unemployment rate stands at 4.1%, roughly half the national average of 7.9%. Our economy remains diverse, robust, and ready to unleash the power and innovation of the private sector to recover from this new recession, and return to a place of long-term strength that surpasses even our greatest past accomplishments.

Utah's ability to weather this new storm, and recover from it faster, stronger, and in a way that ensures opportunity, security, and quality of life for all Utahns for generations to come, would not have been possible without your contributions over the past 11 years as Governor and your wise leadership now.



You have always reminded us why Utah's successes are truly important, from the "Best State for Business" to the "Best Managed State in the Nation." It has always been about *people*. The individuals, families, and communities that make up Utah have been on your mind and in your heart each and every day you have served. Strong economic opportunity, a lean and efficient government that protects individual rights, and a pioneering spirit that works hard and looks after her own—these are the ingredients that allow human beings, and a state, to truly flourish. And we indeed have flourished, and will continue to do so, thanks to your dedication and commitment to our people.

On behalf of the Salt Lake Chamber and Utah's business community, we thank you for your tireless service through these years. And we hope you may look back on your work, and that of all Utahns under your leadership, as another significant chapter in the long and rich heritage of Utah's success and prosperity.

Sincerely,

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