

September 22, 2026

Utah State Board of Education
250 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Re: Updated Draft of Standards for Constitutional Government and Citizenship Course

Dear Ms. Everette and Utah State Board of Education Committee Members:

The standards drafting committee has completed its review of the most recent Board recommendations for the American Constitutional Government and Citizenship course standards.

You can see the committee's responses and recommendations in [this Google document](#). To better understand the document, note that changes suggested by the USBE are highlighted in yellow. We have highlighted in green all significant changes we recommend. We are grateful for the Board's recommendations and incorporated many of them. We have also left explanations for those instances in which we do not recommend changes. You can also see [a "clean" draft of the standards here](#) and they are also included in our email as .docx and .pdf files.

In the Board's most recent round of recommendations, the primary goal was to give greater prominence to examining the fundamental role of religion in United States history and the primacy of religious liberty to American constitutional government (as required by HB 312, SB 268, and other legislation). The committee did its best to balance incorporating these recommendations while keeping the number of standards to a manageable amount for teachers, as well as not unduly emphasizing one important topic to the neglect of other important ones. The Board may note that the topics of religion and religious liberty are included throughout the course in the following locations, some of which were already included in the previous draft:

- Overall course description (incorporating the language of SB 268)
- Section titled, "Principles of Civic Preparation"

- Strand 1 description
- Strand 1 required texts including “relevant biblical passages” and “colonial sermons and pamphlets”
- Strand 1 guiding questions
- Standard 1.3
- Standard 1.4
- Standard 1.7
- Standards 2.9 (2.10)
- Strand 3 guiding questions
- Standard 3.3
- Standard 3.9
- Strand 4 description
- Standard 4.5
- Standard 4.7

We also recommend a number of additional changes, including to clarifying guidance for teachers on how to approach the topic of civic virtues in the classroom (see our notes throughout).

We are confident that the current draft of the standards exemplifies in proper proportion the academic rigor, good pedagogy, and careful compliance with all relevant civics legislation expected of a course in American Constitutional Government and Citizenship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Burton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "B".

Robert Burton, PhD

Committee Chair, on behalf of the Standards Drafting Committee