

Feb 25, 2026

**Subject: Opposing HB 435 – Protecting Utah’s Communities and Leading with Sovereignty**

Dear Representative/Senator [Last Name],

We are constituents writing to urge you to vote **NO** on **HB 435**, "State Policy on Judea and Samaria." While the intent of this bill may be symbolic, its passage would invite harmful collateral consequences for our local communities while directly contradicting Utah’s foundational principles of institutional neutrality, religious liberty, and fiscal pragmatism. We respectfully ask you to consider the following points:

**1. Violating Institutional Neutrality**

Last year, this body passed **HB 261** to ensure state institutions remain neutral on sensitive political controversies. **HB 435 creates a massive double standard.** It forces our schools and state agencies to adopt a specific, highly charged theological stance. **We cannot demand neutrality from our educators while simultaneously mandating political dogma in their textbooks.**

**2. Protecting Local Community Safety and Cohesion**

Recent events in our community — [including the shooting targeting a prominent local Muslim leader](#) — remind us that language, symbolism, and state action have real consequences close to home. At moments like this, Utah’s responsibility is not to inflame division but to model restraint, safety, and respect for all faiths and communities. Members of both the local Arab and Jewish communities have disavowed this bill. **Consider the real human impact that policies like HB 435 may have within our neighborhoods and vote NO.**

**3. Fiscal and Administrative Irresponsibility**

In their own words, “[The American Legislative Exchange Council \(ALEC\)](#) is America’s largest nonpartisan, voluntary membership organization of state legislators **dedicated to the principles of limited government, free markets and federalism.**” **HB 435, an ALEC bill, contradicts their own mission by creating even more governmental oversight of the language in state publications and is fiscally irresponsible.** It would require state agencies to scrub and reprint curriculum and maps to replace terminology used by the U.S. State Department. At a time when Utahns are concerned about housing and water, we should not be spending taxpayer resources on performative foreign policy. **Utah should be the conductor of its own policy, staying ahead of the curve by focusing on the needs of our own families and communities, rather than following a script written by national lobbyists.**

#### 4. **Infringing on the Rights of Conscience**

Utah was founded by people seeking refuge from state-mandated religious views. Our State Constitution (Article I, Section 4) explicitly forbids the union of Church and State. By codifying a theological naming convention into secular law, the state is effectively endorsing a specific religious interpretation of land ownership. This sets a dangerous precedent for government overreach into the private matters of faith and conscience of Utah citizens.

#### 5. **Abiding by the "Utah Compromise"**

Utah is nationally respected for the "**Utah Compromise**"—a governing philosophy built on finding "fairness for all" by balancing competing rights without erasing one side. HB 435 is the antithesis of this value. By mandating biblical names for a region home to over three million Palestinians, the state is engaging in a top-down erasure of a contemporary people's identity. **We should be exporting our model of mutual respect, not adopting a policy of exclusion.**

#### 6. **Inappropriate Business**

The region has been recognized as the West Bank since 1949, just after the Nakba when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcibly removed from their homes or killed. It is inappropriate for the state of Utah to decide how people in Utah should now refer to this area, while the Palestinians that live there have no say in the matter.

#### 7. **Illegally Occupied Territories**

This bill incorrectly refers to "the land, **restored to Israel** from Jordan during the 1967 Six-Day War," while in fact, the land was never restored to Israel, but was illegally occupied. According to [The International Court of Justice in its July 19, 2024 Advisory Opinion](#), "**Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories**, which comprise the [West Bank](#) (including [East Jerusalem](#)) and the [Gaza Strip](#), **since 1967, making it the longest military occupation in modern history.**" The ruling went on to state, "the State of Israel is under an obligation to bring an end to its **unlawful** presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible."

Utah leads the nation in economic diversity, charitable giving, and fiscal stability. We lead with the "Utah Compromise" and "Fairness for All." Should the Utah Legislature choose to address the Israel-Palestine conflict, they should address the urgent humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Such a dialogue would better reflect the real values and commitment of people in Utah to human life, international human rights, and humanitarian law.

We ask you to uphold these values and show true leadership by voting **against** HB 435.

Respectfully,  
[Your Name]  
[Your Address/City]  
[Your Phone Number]