

**The Three Best Items and the Three Worst Items to Pass in 2007 Legislative Session:**

In the 1960's, there was a popular television series called, *The Twilight Zone*.

Weekly episodes centered on characters in situations of what-ifs. Those what-if plots usually resulted in some type of unusual ending or consequence. And, as in every episode, the narrator, Rod Steiger, would comment with a moral to the story.

Every year, Utahns are amazed at how lawmakers take citizens for granted. Of course, many times it is tough for citizens to know because of the secrecy inside the majority party. Besides the "politics as usual" this year, there is more than politics in this current session. As the session nears the end, it appears that a few Republicans are more interested in representing themselves. As a consequence, we, the taxpayers, will be paying for their "what-ifs".

Take for example, the Voucher Bill, HB148. Most Utahns are against private school vouchers (one poll has Utahns split while another poll has Utahns firmly against vouchers). The bill flew through both houses because there was no debate in the Senate and House leaders twisted arms with backroom deals. The push to pass the Voucher Bill will undoubtedly be tied up in the courts because of constitutional questions surrounding the bill. Once again, taxpayers will be paying for a mistake.

Another bill, HB235 will ban abortions in Utah. Whether or not someone is against abortion is irrelevant. Abortion is still legal and this will be challenged in the courts. Utah made the same mistake in 1991 and it cost taxpayers \$1 million.

Another item of concern was the Legislative vote to help build the Real soccer stadium. Most Utahns would like Real to stay in Utah, but they also want Checketts to fund it. Despite that, the political soap opera surrounding the financial help of helping Real was another example of a great sales job. We have been sold on the fact that hotel taxes, "outside" money, will be the only tax dollars used for Real. But, before the Real decision was made, where would that money have gone?

However, this session does have some bills that would help many Utahns.

SB36, the Safety Belt Enforcement Law will be a primary traffic violation.

HB122S03 is a bill to give tax credits for those who purchase efficient vehicles that help keep the air clean.

HB178 will limit gifts given to lawmakers from lobbyists. Interestingly, most Utahns favor this bill, but the only objection to this bill comes from Republican lawmakers.

In the end, the session will prove once again that lawmakers know more than we do.

By the last day of this session, lawmakers will handout an enormous tax cut, raise our gas tax, fund businesses like Real and private schools. In addition, broken promises on funding education will continue as in past years.

As a Rod Steiger comment in our "Zone", the moral to this story is that we put too much trust in those who draft our laws in the dark.

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