

On January 19, Utah Governor Spencer Cox delivered his State of the State address before members of the Utah Legislature that were specifically invited to bring their children and grandchildren. He noted that "...it is to this group of very special guests – the youth of our great state – that I wish to direct my remarks this evening." He referenced the Declaration of Independence and the "foundational and revolutionary idea: that we are all endowed by our Creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He chose to focus on the latter. "You see, it isn't government's role to give you happiness, but it is government's job to protect your right to pursue it."

He noted, "Recent polling tells us that more young people than ever before believe that, for the first time in our nation's history, their generation will be worse off than their parents.... I know that many of the challenges of our day weigh heavily on your generation.... I grew up in the 80's and 90's, and we worried about a lot things you probably can't relate to..." and he went on to mention nuclear war, the hole in the ozone, Y2K, "over population, acid rain, and – it's true – the Great Salt Lake destroying homes and businesses in the floods – yes, floods – of 1983."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his first inaugural address in 1933 declared: "This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance." Governor Cox quoted the latter phrase, then said: "Oh and fear destroys happiness. To every young person today grappling with fear, I want to speak to you. Whether it be fear of finding a good career or a home you can afford to buy. Or fear of a planet in peril, or attacks on democracy – at home or abroad, or the effects of inflation. Or fear of any of the other crazy things in our society today.... The future of our state is not written in the stars. It is for us...to dictate our destiny. If I could turn your fears into one thing, it would be faith.... Faith in our capacity and commitment to solve today's hard problems together. Faith in a future worth being excited about."

A significant part of his speech was focused on water. He said, "Of course, even good jobs and good homes won't mean much if we are not good stewards of this beautiful place we get to call home. And any discussion of stewardship in a desert climate must start with water. We find ourselves in the greatest drought in the western United States in over 1,200 years. Earlier this month, a report predicted that in just five short years the Great Salt Lake will completely disappear. Let me be absolutely clear. We are not going to let that happen. Last year, ...the Legislature passed 12 major water conservation bills and \$500 million in new funding. And even more important, the people of Utah responded by saving billions of gallons of water in our time of need."

He continued, "Now, you have heard me ask our fellow Utahns to unite in faith and prayer in asking God to help deliver us from drought. I have been mocked both at home and abroad by clever comedians and pundits in the media. But, as a man of faith, I make no excuses for my beliefs. I believe there is real power in people of all different faiths and backgrounds uniting together and pleading for help from a higher authority than our own. I am grateful – and thank God every night – for the impressive amounts of snow we have received so far this season. Miraculously, the Great Salt Lake has already risen more than it did all last year!"

He added, "A few months ago, before the first big storm, I asked my team to include \$5 million in my budget proposal for flood mitigation. I didn't want to be the person to show up for a prayer meeting without my umbrella. It's too soon to know, but I sincerely hope we need that money.... I ask again that we join together to ask for relief from this drought, all while 'knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.' You see, I believe that God CAN fill the lake. But if not, then we must."

He declared, "We have to maintain a continued focus on water conservation and agriculture optimization. To that end, I am proposing another \$500 million in water conservation investment in addition to new policy changes that will reduce our per capita use. And, if I might ask, please look beyond those that would demonize our farmers. Our farmers and ranchers are the backbone of our nation and state. They do some of the most difficult work imaginable and deserve our respect. I promise they will be a huge part of the solution, just like you and me. Let's continue to help them modernize their operations so that we can both save water and increase food production." See: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/10xFxQg1ILo0Mouj9ldQaE93hpY4Fv\\_-y/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10xFxQg1ILo0Mouj9ldQaE93hpY4Fv_-y/view).