



SUTHERLAND
— INSTITUTE —
A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM

ANNUAL REPORT



2024



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Message from the President and Chairman of the Board

This is a time when the political winds are shifting dramatically – and that creates a tremendous opportunity for change across a number of policy fronts – from federalism to education to the social safety net, just to name a few. But Sutherland Institute is not just built for political opportunity. We respond to current issues, but we're in the business of policy change through culture-building. That's a long-term approach that goes beyond the headline issues of the moment.

This long view is reflected in Sutherland's mission statement: "We equip Americans to advance principled public policy that promotes the constitutional values of faith, family, and freedom."

Sutherland's data-driven and principles-based approach to policy is apparent in every public event, publication, op-ed, and multimedia piece, including podcasts and short videos, that we produce to inform and guide citizens. Through relationships with news media, policymakers, thought leaders, and community influencers, we expand the reach of our content far beyond our direct network to move hearts and minds toward founding principles and constitutional values. The goal has always been – and will always be – to "make sound ideas broadly popular" in Utah and beyond.

To that end, we affirm the ideals enshrined in America's founding documents – the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution – as the bedrock of American governance, enterprise, and liberty. Political and policy debates are elevated when imbued with greater fidelity to the American constitutional order in law, policy, and culture. The core institutions of civil society – including families, communities of faith, and the free enterprise system – are indispensable to fostering a functional culture that equips citizens for the rigors of self-government.

As we build on the progress and victories highlighted in this report, we hope you'll join Sutherland's community of constitutional champions. When citizens join together, we can meet any challenge and cultivate this generation's "new birth of freedom."



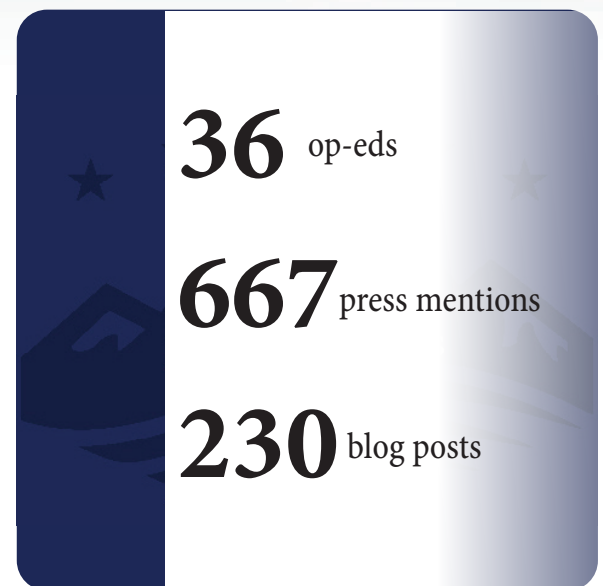
Rick Larsen
President & CEO



Brent Andrews
Chairman

2024 at a Glance

Throughout 2024, Sutherland Institute shaped public policy and public discourse on important issues through legislation, research, commentary, a busy calendar of events, and a steady stream of multimedia. We continue to build capacity and expand our reach and impact. Our reporting on issues like federalism, parental involvement in education, family life, elections, and opportunity shaped major debates in 2024 – with significant policy impacts expected in 2025. It was a breakout year for Sutherland’s audience-building efforts, with our weekly “Defending Ideas” show alone yielding nearly 1.3 million annual views and listens!



220,281
impressions

across 3 social media channels



Sutherland Events; Building a Community of Champions for Faith, Family, and Freedom

Sutherland experts and staff hosted, supported, and spoke across a wide range of powerful events throughout 2024.

The Election Trust Forum – May, Utah Valley University
Sutherland partnered with Johns Hopkins University and Utah Valley University to host important discussions on election security, voting accessibility and trust.

Free Exercise: America's Story of Religious Liberty – Documentary Screenings – September, American Heritage School and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Park City
Sutherland partnered with American Heritage School in American Fork and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Park City, along with the producers of the new religious freedom documentary *Free Exercise: America's Story of Religious Liberty*, to screen this documentary telling the story of America's first freedom.



Derek Monson

Marriage and Work Penalties in Government Programs – November, AEI
Sutherland's Rick Larsen and Nic Dunn participated in a Washington, D.C. event with the American Enterprise Institute, where they collaborated with policy leaders from around the country to discuss social safety net and benefits cliffs reform. Rick moderated a discussion on addressing disincentives experienced by families on the social safety net, while Nic presented Sutherland's newest research publication, *Strengthening the American Dream*, which outlines how disincentives in the safety net discourage work and marriage among Utah families.

Upward Mobility and Benefits Cliffs Summit – December, Weber State University
Sutherland partnered with Weber State University and Georgia Center for the "Upward Mobility and Benefits Cliffs Summit." The event also showcased Sutherland's research on safety net reform, and featured conversations with state and national policy experts, including a special message from Congressman Blake Moore.

Both of the two preceding events elevated Sutherland leadership on work and opportunity, and generated essential momentum for ongoing policy wins in 2025.

State Policy Network Annual Meeting

At the beginning of August, members of Sutherland's executive team were in Phoenix for the State Policy Network's Annual Meeting. Following the remarkable success of the *Defending Ideas* podcast, Nic Dunn, Sutherland's vice president of strategy and communications, joined a panel that covered how to launch and maintain a policy podcast.



Nic Dunn



Family Values keynoter Joy Jones with Lt. Gov. Henderson

trans-Atlantic dialogue and exchange ideas on how to strengthen families. We capped off the day with the Sutherland Family Values Award Dinner.

Strengthening Families Webinar Series

Sutherland partnered with the European Union and International Affairs Office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to host a series of 3 webinars with European and U.S. family scholars to discuss how communities and nations can support strong families in today's world.

Family Policy Exchange

Sutherland partnered with the European Union and International Affairs Office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to host both European and U.S. policymakers and community leaders in a

Covering Election Concerns in DC

Sutherland Chief Growth Officer Derek Monson presented a constitutional perspective in primary elections at a conference of academic primary election researchers and political practitioners in Washington, D.C.

Utah's 2025 Education Policy Agenda

Sutherland Education Policy Fellow Christine Cooke Fairbanks hosted a fireside chat with Gov. Cox's Senior Education Advisor Dr. Richard Nye and moderated a panel discussion with Dr. Nye, Utah House Education Committee Chair Rep. Candice Pierucci, and Utah State Board of Education Chair Jim Moss to discuss the direction and vision of education policy in Utah and how it can better serve the needs of children and families.

Common Ground Events

In partnership with the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah, Sutherland is a regular co-host of community conversations featuring University of Utah Impact Scholars including:

Arthur Brooks, former AEI president and current Harvard professor. Arthur spoke to political, business and community leaders about impactful leadership and transcending polarization

Tim Shriver is the co-founder of Disagree Better – a national movement designed to identify more productive language and methods of debate.

Utah Housing Solutions Summit

In partnership with the American Enterprise Institute, Sutherland convened a discussion on housing policy with Utah city mayors, state lawmakers, governor's office officials, and national housing policy experts. The event was keynoted by Utah Gov. Spencer Cox and AEI housing scholar Ed Pinto.



Gov. Cox

Annual Congressional Series

- 6 events throughout August and September – one forum for each member of Utah's federal delegation
- Hosted by the Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah

Our annual Congressional Series features each member of Utah's federal delegation, giving each their own forum to interact directly with those they represent. The series facilitates constructive civic engagement and respectful dialogue as our delegation members speak on a range of critical issues.



Sen. Lee



Sen. Curtis



Rick Larsen with Sen. Romney



Rep. Owens



Sutherland legal scholar Bill Duncan with Rep. Maloy



Rep. Moore



Sutherland's Powerful Policy Influence

Sutherland focused legislative efforts on six priority bills during Utah's 2024 general legislative session – all of which were enacted and signed by the governor.

HB 246 – Office of Families

Building on nearly 30 years of leadership advocating for the elevation of the family as an institution in Utah public policy debates and decisions, Sutherland drove legislation to create the Office of Families within the Utah Department of Health and Human Services to proactively promote policies that strengthen families.

HB 396 – Workplace Discrimination Amendments

Sutherland contributed a powerful voice articulating the need for this legislation that prohibits an employer from requiring employees to act or communicate in ways that conflict with their religious beliefs.

HB 460 – Government Employee Conscience Protection Amendments

Sutherland played a key role in helping protect the religious freedom of public employees by allowing them to request exemption from specific tasks if it does not impose undue hardship on their employer, and by providing legal protections for those making such requests.

SB 13 – Education Entity Amendments

On the heels of a yearlong Sutherland effort to educate voters and policymakers about the innovative value of microschools, this legislation put home-based microschools on comparable footing with private and charter schools.

SB 150 – Exercise of Religion Amendments

The culmination of decades of Sutherland advocacy calling for Utah to enact a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, this legislation recognizes freedom of religion as a fundamental right and prohibits a government entity from substantially burdening a person's free exercise of religion, unless the burden is essential to furthering a compelling governmental interest by the least restrictive means.

SJR 3 – Joint Resolution Concerning the Success Sequence

Driven by a Sutherland partnership with AEI scholar Ian Rowe, this legislation called on the state board of education to identify ways the impacts of following a life pattern grounded in education, work and strong family formation can be incorporated into state curriculum standards for students in grades 6-12.

Speaking Directly to the Public

High-Impact Expert Analysis and Commentary in Key Media Outlets

Sutherland experts offered crucial commentary by writing **36 op-eds published in 8 publications** at the state and national level.

Rapidly Expanding Media Footprint

Sutherland expertise and research appeared in the news 667 times throughout 2024, more than doubling the press coverage from the previous year.

Rapid Audience Growth: The Defending Ideas Show

In 2023, Sutherland launched an ambitious multimedia project: a weekly audio/video podcast on some of the most critical public policy issues facing our state and nation, including constitutional law, family policy, religious freedom, education, upward mobility, and more. **The show has already far surpassed 1 million views and listens and is averaging several thousand views/listens per day.**

Combination of Local and National Expertise

Guests include members of Congress, renowned national experts, state legislators, other community leaders, and Sutherland policy scholars.



Equipping Listeners to Make Sound Ideas Broadly Popular

Defending Ideas fortifies voters who wish to fearlessly advocate for sound principles and defend these ideas in a way that persuades, rather than polarizes. It's a stark – and refreshing – departure from the tone that dominates much of the political and policy media landscape.

Audio and video from the 51 Defending Ideas show episodes in 2024 reached people **in all 50 states**, with concentrated audience reach in states like Utah, California, Texas, Florida, and New York.

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New Original Research on Religion, Citizen Priorities, Voting, Education, Parental Engagement, and Opportunity

Sutherland published 9 major reports and issue briefs in 2024.

Utahns' views on ranked choice voting: Overview of New Survey Data of Likely Voter Sentiment (February)

As Utah continues working to refine and improve how residents participate in elections, sound analysis of new voting methods based on experiential data of the voters is essential. This brief provides survey data showing that likely voters in Utah support keeping ranked choice voting as an option for municipal elections for those cities and towns that choose to use it. The support is bipartisan but favors only certain types of elections — primarily those for city office.

Utah Voter Priorities for 2024 Election: Overview of New Survey Data of Likely Voter Sentiment (March)

This issue brief provides an overview of likely voter sentiment toward various issues that impact how they will vote in the 2024 election. Likely voters in Utah rank “kitchen table issues” like housing affordability, education funding and taxes as the most important to their vote this election year.

What Good Does Religion Do? Social Benefits of Religion, Volume 1 (May)

This report explores how policymakers can benefit from understanding the unique social benefits of religious belief and practice. It explains how valuable social and economic contributions of religion-based organizations can easily be undermined by regulatory burdens.

Faith and the Climate of Freedom: Social Benefits of Religion, Volume 2 (July)

Volume 2 shows how the religious teachings that motivate believers are often channeled in socially beneficial directions. It demonstrates that securing greater freedom for some need not diminish it for others. Indeed, it shows how efforts of people of faith to secure their constitutionally protected rights have made it more likely for people who did not share that faith to secure theirs.

Views on Religion: New Survey Data Profiles Utahns' Views on Religion and Religious Freedom (July)

This brief presents the results of a Sutherland Institute/Y2 Analytics survey on whether religious freedom is a net positive for society.

Boosting Parent Engagement in Public Schools by Strengthening Parent Access (August)

To better understand how effectively districts are making curriculum information accessible to parents, Sutherland Institute reviewed Utah's 41 school districts, using a rubric that reflects what we consider a robust threshold for parent access implementation by districts.

The Parent-Teacher Perception Gap: How Parents and Teachers Align on Engagement and Access (September)

This issue brief looks at the experience of parents and teachers in Utah education, including parent involvement in their children's education, and how accessible curriculum and instructional materials are to parents.

Education & the 2024 Election: How Utah Voters Prioritize Education Issues (October)

This issue brief provides an overview of likely voter sentiment toward different education policy issues in the state.

Strengthening the American Dream (November)

This report leverages new experiential data from a statewide survey to unveil how “benefits cliffs” in the social safety net disincentivize work and marriage for far too many families in Utah and beyond who are trying to achieve work-based self-reliance.

Expanding Partnerships

Sutherland continues to expand and leverage partnerships with key institutions both in Utah and throughout the nation. Whether co-hosting events with the Hinckley Institute at the University of Utah, partnering with the Alliance Defending Freedom to protect religious liberty in the courts, elevating the importance of poverty policy reforms with the Alliance for Opportunity in Washington, D.C., or collaborating on an ongoing basis with AEI on a range of issues – Sutherland’s profile as a premier public policy organization continues to grow.

What’s Next?

In 2025, Sutherland will build upon successes in parent-centered education policy, workforce opportunity and welfare reform, family policy, and protecting our constitutional liberties. We’ll expand efforts to address poverty by removing barriers to upward mobility, explore the debates around voting and elections with sound scholarship, take on emerging tech challenges, advance parent-centered education policy, and strengthen the connection between public policy and attitudes of likely voters through ongoing original survey research.



Advancing Parent-Centered Education Policy: Rick Larsen, Rep. Candice Pierucci, former state education board chair Jim Moss, Sutherland Education Fellow Christine Cook Fairbanks, and the Governor’s Senior Education Advisor Rich Nye



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