

## Transcript of Governor Herbert Interview

Interviewer

Governor, what is the state of Utah's children?

Governor Herbert

Well, the most important thing for children is parents.

Interviewer

I'm going to start --

Governor Herbert

I know that programs are good, but the most important thing for children is having good parents. Parents that are involved and care about their wellbeing and ensure that they do their homework, go to school, live productive lives, get the skills necessary to become contributing citizens to our society. So it starts at home and we know that that's not necessarily always ideal, but we ought to strive for the ideal.

Interviewer

So there's two-generational programs that are being piloted out there that are helping struggling families who are holding down two, three jobs to keep things rolling in their home. It's difficult for them to spend a lot of time with their kids. They must work. Can you speak to those families?

Governor Herbert

Sure I can. Again, the best thing we can do for anybody who is in poverty is to provide them a good job. That really is -- has a relationship in your skill set. That's why it's important that the rising generation have good skills so they can have productive jobs that makes them enough money to support themselves and their family so they don't have to work two or three jobs. It starts with the generation today. We have jobs out there in the marketplace right now going wanting that start at 50, 60 thousand dollars a year plus benefits. But no takers because they don't have the skills necessary to qualify. So education really is a key component to success in life. Good family stability. A family life. Again, a measure of success. And a leader towards economic success. The ones who have the most difficult times economically are single parents -- particularly women -- with children at home. The success we find across this country is if you want to have success economically, graduate from high school -- and in Utah we're saying go beyond high school and get some post high school education. Two, get a job. Three, get married. And four, have children. In that order. If you want to guarantee and have the most likely opportunity for success economically, follow those four steps.

Interviewer

So there are programs out there -- we're getting off topic.

Governor Herbert

I know, but we're talking about important stuff.

Interviewer

But let me hit this first, and if you want to come back. So I didn't know about House Bill 96 or Senate Bill 42 -- all this is new. It's helping a lot of families, not just children, but their parents as well. So tell me about the high quality school rating this grant program and why it's working for Utah's children.

Governor Herbert

Well, House Bill 96 I think is what you're talking about and it's probably a little bit early to say it's a success. It's in kind of a pilot program phase and so we'll see. I think it has great promise. I think most everybody understands and agrees that early intervention in children's lives is a precursor for success. Particularly early intervention in children that are at risk that have some challenges at home or in their environment. So early intervention's a good policy, early intervention for at-risk kids is a great policy. So that's what this is designed to do is to help people that are in preschool age to get the skills necessary to be ready for school so that they will not fall behind, they'll be able to grow with their educational opportunities grade by grade by grade. And we're gonna be tracking these young people from preschool, kindergarten, up through third grade to make sure that their skills are commensurate with the opportunities presented to them.

Interviewer

And some of this grant money is going privately to daycare centers who are training their staff, some funds are being used for a tracking system for Head Start partnering with Salt Lake School District. People are really excited about it.

Governor Herbert

Yeah, it really is a public/private partnership of the first order. Monies with being put up by the private sector. They don't get reimbursed in fact for that money unless the children show marked success. And so we've got the private sector engaged, putting up money to help fund the programs and other sectors of the private sector to help provide the programs and the opportunity to learn at a preschool age, and helping students be prepared for when they get into the public education system. So again, I think it shows great promise and we will review and analyze and make some decisions going forward. The good thing I like about it is it's not a mandate from the government to the local communities. It really is local school boards saying I think I think there's an opportunity for us. They're embracing this program as they see a need and an opportunity. And really, this is all about local control and helping to empower parents and to help them provide some additional tools with an early intervention opportunity program.

Interviewer

So the first question that I didn't ask you, but there was a federal funding, a \$15 million grant that we didn't apply for for at-risk kids. Talk about why the state chose not to accept this money?

Governor Herbert

Well one, I think many of us are concerned that the federal government is spending money beyond their means and this was monies that were not budgeted for, it was just taken out of existing dollars and so the approach of having a federally mandated universal preschool program throughout all 50 states is what policy I don't support. One, I don't think we can afford it, number one, with the huge deficits we're running and the out of balance spending that we have in Washington. And two, I don't think the federal government should be mandating to the states how they do their school system anyway. I think our approach is much better and it's one that we can afford that shows promise and really is local, state controls and certainly local school board controls which is good policy. Federal mandates and the federal takeover of our education system is not good policy.

Interviewer

So the district leaders who I talked to said it would've improved the lives of many, many at-risk children.

Governor Herbert

I don't discount the fact that early intervention of those at-risk kids out there would find help and benefit. We survived up to this point in our history without having a program, but that doesn't mean we can't improve it. But you only can improve what you can afford to pay for. And so the funding aspect of this is really critical from a Washington, D.C. perspective. We can still do, and are doing similar kinds of things here in a much more fiscally prudent way here in the state of Utah. So the concept of early intervention is alive and well in Utah, it's just not a federally mandated program that we cannot afford.

Interviewer

Did you want to talk about CHIP in 2015? Are we going to continue CHIP in the states?

Governor Herbert

I don't know of any movement to eliminate CHIP so there's no reason for me to doubt that CHIP will not continue. Designed to help, you know, our young people with health care needs. Health care is a big topic and certainly very complex. Our CHIP program in Utah has been underutilized, I think as part of the culture of the people of Utah to be a little more self-sufficient, find ways to solve their own unique problems by first going to family members, then to church, then to the community, and only lastly to a government program. And hence, we see

underutilization of the CHIP program in Utah. I think that's probably a good sign in many ways because people are finding ways to solve their own problems which is a good -- I think a good culture to have as opposed to looking to big brother to solve our problems for us.

Interviewer

An intergenerational poverty commission was established recently. Can you talk about that? There are 132,000 children in poverty, many of whom are part of families living in intergenerational poverty.

Governor Herbert

Well, we need to break the cycle of poverty. Unfortunately, it seems to be a learned, you know, skill. I was in New Orleans when they had Hurricane Katrina and Rita and talked with then Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu who is now the mayor of New Orleans and we talked about what did we learn? We learned a lot of lessons in that situation, but part of it was intergenerational poverty. You know, third, fourth, fifth generations still relying upon the government for assistance. And it almost destroyed any of their self-initiative to do things. So here in Utah we have similar kinds of circumstances. Maybe not as grave as what we found in New Orleans, but the ability for us to make sure that if your family is in poverty doesn't mean you have to be. It starts with good skills, good principles, and good values that you implement in your life and find opportunity to escape poverty. And so what we're doing with early intervention, what we're doing with at-risk kids, what we're doing with our public education system, our goals of 66 by 2020, our outreach to minorities in saying don't just be the first one in your family to graduate from high school, be the first one in your family to graduate from college. Get a skill. Get a trade. Get an associate degree or a full degree. That's the key to getting out of poverty. And I've already told you that the four main things to escape poverty is first graduate from high school and in Utah we're saying get a college degree. Get something post-high school. Second, get a job. There's job opportunities out there if you look. Have the initiative. Get out there and look. Prepare yourself and find a job. Second, get married and find somebody that can be your companion to live with and to love. And fourth, have children. But have them in that order. Schooling, job, marriage, and children in that order. And if you do that, your chances of being in poverty are less than three percent.

Interviewer

But there are programs, there's a Nurse Family Partnership program -- a 14-year-old girl we're filming who just had a baby. This program is evidence-based and very successful. First-time mothers and nurses going into the home and teaching them proper prenatal care until their child turns two, proper stages of development. So there are programs that do serve and successfully help those who clearly aren't following the four steps you talk of.

Governor Herbert

There are exceptions to every rule. And there are anomalies out there, but we just know that here's the formula for success. If you'll follow that formula your chances of having success in life are greatly enhanced. Now sometimes, people, for a variety of reasons take a deviant path or a different way. And we need to help those people. So if you're a 14-year-old teenager that has a baby, babies having babies is a reality in the world. Doesn't mean we turn a blind eye to that situation. We try to help that person and help them find their pathway to success in their own unique circumstances. But it also means we still teach correct principles and say that the correct pathway is to be married first and have children second. To get a good education, to get a good job. Then get a family. And if you do that, your chances of success are greatly enhanced.