

# Panel weighs in on how women fared in legislative session

ABC4

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SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (ABC4 Utah) – A panel at the Hinckley Institute of Politics explored how women fared in the 2016 Legislative Session.

The state legislature, dominated by men passed more than 470 bills during this year's session.

Many of them impact the daily lives of women.

“Utah women make 70 cents to a man's dollar. That's an issue that hasn't really improved much lately and we see that as a key issue moving forward,” said Stephanie Pitcher of the Utah Women's Coalition.

State Senator, Jani Iwamoto and Representatives, Angela Romero, Becky Edwards and Carol Spackman Moss teamed up to discuss those key issues and the impact of the session on women.

“We had several bills that removed barriers for employment for women, specifically in the area of birthing centers and interior design,” said Edwards, (R) North Salt Lake.

The panel pointed to bills that take strides for Utah women, like increased education funding, workforce training and a bill that requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for breast feeding mothers.





"For employers to be able to provide reasonable accommodation to women who are pregnant or nursing just makes sense," said Edwards.

On the flip side, they say limited Medicaid expansion and the abortion bill requiring anesthesia, in some cases are a step back.

"I think it is one of the most egregious bills that has ever passed regarding abortion, because it's directly impacting doctors in the medical profession who are universally opposed to it, and I think it's putting women at risk," said Moss, (D) Salt Lake City.

There was also a lot of discussion about efforts to encourage more women to get involved in politics.

Members of the panel say that is the best way to level the playing field.

Of the 104 members of the state legislature, only 16 are women.