

# Orton endorses House work bill

Rep. Bill Orton voted July 31 in favor of the welfare reform legislation before the United States House of Representatives, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. "This legislation marks a major breakthrough — we will be ending welfare as we have known it. From the beginning, my overall goals during the course of the welfare reform debate have been to transform welfare to a work-based system, ensuring that states like Utah have the flexibility to continue their successful reform efforts and to protect innocent children. I have worked diligently with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to craft a bill that accomplishes these goals, and I am pleased to say that Congress has finally passed a bill that achieves these important goals," stated Orton.

In addition, Orton pointed out that the bill contains a provision allowing Utah to continue its successful welfare reform efforts. Under the bill that passed the House two weeks ago, Utah would have had to change its program to meet the restrictive federal requirements.

Moreover, the congressional budget office estimated that the earlier bill imposed \$13 billion in unfunded costs on states unless they restricted eligibility or decreased assistance to those in need. The National Governors Association and the state of Utah expressed concerns about the unfunded costs. Orton worked with members of the conference committee to address the vital concerns.

The bill that passed the House contained several of the provisions proposed by Orton and others who have worked over recent months to find a bipartisan common ground on welfare reform. The conference report that passed the House is more flexible than the earlier bill because it allows states with waivers to use individual definitions in meeting federal work participation requirements. It also reduces the unfunded costs in the bill substantially. Unlike the House version from two weeks ago, the conference report maintains current protections against child abuse, guarantees that children do not lose Medicaid health care coverage and provides states with the option to provide non-cash assistance to children whose parents have reached the time limit.

"Previous bills which I opposed treated innocent 4-year-old children the same as 40-year-old deadbeats. This bill is far better for children and far more flexible for states than any of the other welfare reform proposals that have been passed by this Congress," Orton continued. "We finally have a bill that should be signed into law."

Orton indicated that he still had concerns regarding specific provisions in the bill, but said he believes federal lawmakers will revisit some of the issues in the next Congress.

"As long as we protect innocent children, states have the flexibility to continue their reform efforts and the system as a whole is transformed into a work-based system, we have made a quantum leap in welfare reform. It was crucial to work together across party lines to achieve these goals and to create a bill that can be signed into law," concluded Orton.

# County removes locked gate blocking class B canyon road



From right, Carbon Commissioner Bill Krompel and county employee Carl Schade remove the locked gate blocking access to the road in Whitmore Canyon near Sunnyside. Addressing Carbon government's Aug. 2 action, Krompel indicated that the commission sent a registered letter informing Penta Creeks that the structure unlawfully blocked public access to a county class B road. Citing state statute and including a legal opinion from the Utah Attorney General's Office, Carbon government's written notice directed Penta Creeks to remove the locked gate within 10 days of receiving the letter. When Penta Creeks failed to comply by the Aug. 1 deadline, the county acted accordingly. "I support private property rights, but the commission has the legal responsibility to keep county class B roads unobstructed," explained Krompel. "According to research, the road has a 52-year history of continuous public use and the county has not

vacated it. Legally, the commission had two choices — vacate the road or exercise the self-help clause and remove the obstruction." Discussing local property owners' concerns, Wellington businessman and Whitmore Canyon landholder Glen Wells pointed out that the area along the roadway to the reservoir contains 'minimal public domain.' Wells did not dispute the road's class B status, but stressed the fact that the vast majority of the land is privately owned and, therefore, is 'not a public playground.' Wells raised concerns regarding potential liability, lack of law enforcement presence as well as the landholders' right to protect and control or limit access to privately owned property in the canyon. "I am not being critical of the county's actions — I realize the commissioners are wielding a double-edged sword," commented Wells, indicating that the public access versus private property debate poses a complicated issue.

## First traffic checkpoints conducted in Price on Friday, Saturday

Utah Highway Patrol Sgt. Jeff Horrocks talks to one of hun-

## Sheriff releases facts ECISO acts on drug