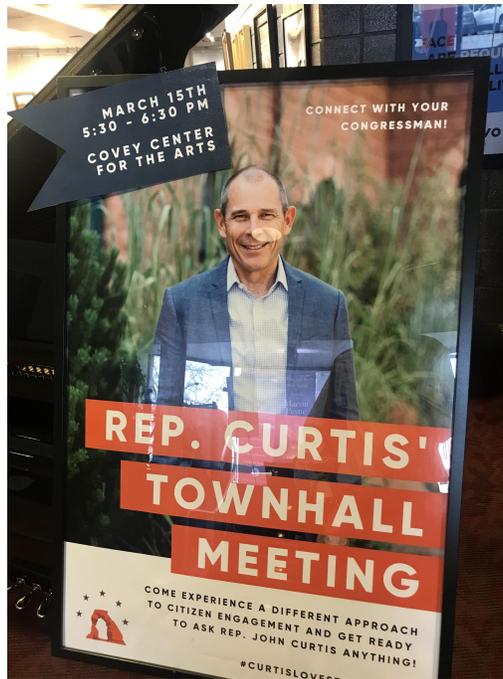


## Keeping Congressman Curtis informed about UIMF Civil Engagement At Local Town Hall



*A billboard outside the auditorium promotes the event*

On March 15, 2021, I was able to attend a town hall meeting by Congressman John Curtis (R-UT) at the Covey Center for the Arts in downtown Provo, UT. This is an interactive session where constituents and the general public are permitted to speak directly with their Representatives and ask questions. The elected Official will then explain the situation, their standpoints on it, and their solutions to the issue. Many community members were present as well as high-level staff of Congressman Curtis. This is an enormously beneficial practice for democracy and sustainability. *Civic engagement matters. Open, honest dialogue matters.*



*Congressman Curtis answers questions from constituents*

Although numerous important issues were raised, for the purpose of this narrative, we will focus solely on the portions regarding environmental concerns. Congressman Curtis is passionate about the environment, and is a self-proclaimed “climate conservative.” He believes that Republicans also care about the environment, but do not want to be associated with the negative stigma that follows the words, ‘climate,’ or ‘environment.’ Therefore, they avoid engaging in this topic. Consequently, Conservatives are then left out of the decision process and advocacy efforts have become partisan. Yet, the earth is something that we can and should all care about. Free of the political and societal presumptions and biases, on its face value it is something that everyone wants. It is indisputable basic human psychology that we like things that are orderly, clean, fresh, and beautiful.



*Rep. Curtis addresses the audience*

Congressman Curtis began by saying that Utah loves the environment. He is certain that this is an important issue to many here in the beehive state, and that we are a great example. He spoke of how the scenery of the mountains as a young scout made such an impression on him that he carries to this day. He explained, while science and data are very important, the real motivator for environmentalism is emotional connection.

Issues addressed were the Bonneville Shoreline Trail in Salt Lake county, his growing concern over the misuse of separation of powers regarding the Bears Ears monument in Utah, and youth involvement.



*Congressman John Curtis (left) and myself (right)*

Utah International Mountain Forum works closely with the office of Congressman John Curtis and the elected official as well: several of our members interned at his office both in Utah and in Washington, D.C. and kept him informed [about activities of UIMF](#) to advocate for sustainable mountain development (SMD) in Utah and elsewhere and the State of Utah as one of the promising models of SMD. Congressman famously spoke on the floor of the United States House of Representatives [about UIMF efforts to promote SMD at the United Nations](#) and High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in September 2018. Taking into account strong interest of Congressman Curtis to the sustainable development of rural areas in the State of Utah, I was able to briefly speak to Congressman Curtis and inform about the most recent UIMF activities. He remembered me from previous interactions and was happy to see me

involved again. We took a picture together, at which point I thanked him, and he encouraged me to “keep up the good work.”

*Dallas Karren, Vice President, Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU*