

# 'Mormon Land': Atlantic journalist McKay Coppins talks about Prop 2, Mitt Romney and the LDS Church's political influence in Utah and nationally

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(Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune) The Salt Lake LDS Temple and the Utah State Capitol are seen together, Wednesday, July 26, 2017.

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By The Salt Lake Tribune

Two days before Election Day, Marty Stephens, a Latter-day Saint stake president and the church's chief lobbyist on Utah's Capitol Hill, took to the pulpit and urged his congregations to "Follow the prophet" and, in so many words, vote against the ballot measure legalizing medical marijuana.

Although most Utah voters ultimately bucked the church's position and approved Proposition 2 anyway, Stephens' sermon and the public and behind-the-scenes actions of Utah's predominant faith during the campaign have revived questions about the separation of church and state and whether Latter-day Saint authorities wielded inappropriate influence on

politicians, policymakers and rank-and-file church members.

McKay Coppins, staff writer for The Atlantic and a graduate of Brigham Young University, shares his views on Prop 2, the midterm elections, Mitt Romney, the church's forays into public policy, its clout in Utah and Washington and the intersection of religion and politics.

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