

1-18-2017

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Wednesday, January 18. Today in the Committee of the Whole we heard bills that would help fund shortfalls in State Parks, and two of them passed. One that failed would have allowed State Parks to keep the interest earned off accounts it manages for different programs. Currently, interest on those accounts goes to fund the general appropriations of the state, but I agree with the bill that interest should remain in those State Parks' accounts. State parks need improvement, and this would have been an easy way to support the program, in a very limited way. We also passed bills out of Committee of the Whole that dealt with student data privacy, investment of public funds, and limitations on delegates to a potential Article 5 convention.

In Appropriations we started markup of the budget bill, where we actually approve or amend the Governor's recommendations on the budget. We continue to look at bills and budget moves to take Wyoming Department of Transportation off the General Fund budget, and allow WYDOT a higher fee structure. We also cut positions in the State Engineer's office, as we moved half that budget from the General Fund to Water Development Funds, which have their own revenue sources. In Department of Health we reduced the Governor's cuts to the developmentally disabled, community mental health providers, and to DD pre-schools. I suspect some of those cuts will be reinstated later in the budget's development, but this demonstrates how hard it is to cut services to Wyoming's most disadvantaged citizens. Good night for now.