

1-19-2017

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on January 19. Today, on final reading, House Joint Resolution #2 passed the House. This bill petitions Congress to call for an Article 5 constitutional convention of states to propose a balanced budget amendment to the US Constitution. I remain concerned about the out-of-state lobby money that has been thrown in support of this issue, and I see no reason to call for a constitutional convention. I worry about the ramifications of a convention, and the pressure that would be applied to delegates of a convention, by special interests. We need improved results in Congress, but this is not the route.

Today in Committee of the Whole (COW), we heard HB54, which would have redefined the tax classification structure for agricultural land to include smaller parcels where Ag products are raised. However, the bill wasn't structured correctly, and had some serious unintended consequences. I ended up voting against the bill. It died, but I support the concept of giving folks who produce a significant agricultural crop on a small parcel access to the Ag tax rate. House Bill 131 passed COW today. It redistributes lottery money to local governments proportionate to the sale of lottery tickets in those counties. It also cuts the permanent school account from obtaining any lottery money. I voted against the bill, because it broke the grand bargain when the lottery was formed, which split lottery money between local government and education. The lottery brings in very little money to the State of Wyoming, and really only monetarily benefits those businesses that sell the tickets, and the consumers of those tickets who enjoy the lottery.

Goodnight for now.