

2-25-2017

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Saturday, February 25. On Friday, the Joint Appropriations Conference Committee came to final agreement on the 2017 Supplemental Budget. The final items to be reconciled between the House and Senate were how to handle funding for providers of services to the developmentally disabled and whether to cut a Medicare subsidy for pre-2008 state retirees. The Conference Committee put \$3 million in non-General Funds back into the Department of Health's budget for the developmentally disabled. The pre-2008 Medicare subsidy was not eliminated, because we did not fully understand the impact of the cut to former state employees.

Thursday, the Conference Committee came to agreement on the two largest sticking points in the budget, which were cuts to K12 education and pay cuts to state employees. The agreement moved away from the Senate's position of a \$91.5 million cut to K12 education by June 30 of this year, to a compromise of \$25 million in cuts to K12 education in fiscal year 2018 and another \$20 million in fiscal year 2019. A recalibration of the funding model this coming summer was also put into the education compromise. This process would likely supersede any cut for fiscal year 2019. The agreement reached in the budget did not include a pay cut to state employees, but did include a reduction of 15 more state employee positions, through attrition as vacancies occur.

Friday, in Committee of the Whole, we heard Senate Files that would:

- define Autocycles
- make it a felony to shoot an animal on the property of the person who owned that animal
- create a plan for I-80
- allow an advanced practice registered nurse and a physician assistant to sign a death certificate

We passed SF108 through Committee of the Whole. This bill would create law preventing individual legislators from being sued due to an action of the Legislature. If SF 108 were to pass, lawsuits could be brought against a committee, a body, or the Legislature as a whole, but not against an individual because of a legislative action or decision. This issue was hotly debated, but passed the body, and I supported the bill.

Thank you