

2-15-2018

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from the 2018 Budget Session. The process for a bill during the budget session begins with a vote to see if it will be introduced. If introduced, the bill is assigned to a standing committee, and if it survives scrutiny by the committee, it comes back to the floor of the body for debate in Committee of the Whole (COW). If the bill survives a vote in COW, then it will return for second reading, and finally third reading, with the final vote in the body occurring then. The bill can be amended in committee, in COW, and during second or third reading. In other words, a bill must survive several rounds of votes and amendments just to make it to the other body (the Senate), where the process begins again. It is not, and should not, be easy for a bill to become law.

Today, my bill, House Joint Resolution 5, made it through Introduction and is headed to committee. This resolution would ask the National Park Service to work with the states of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho to create a wildlife conservation fee for Yellowstone National Park visitors, which would support wildlife management efforts in the three states.

HB157 passed an introductory vote today. This bill is defined to protect medical patients from sexual assault by medical practitioners. I voted for the bill. I also voted for introduction of HB25, which would change law on gravel pits. I do not like parts of this bill, but I do like the part that allows landowners to determine how they want to reclaim their private property. The bill failed introduction.

I supported HB155, which I also co-sponsored. This bill will consolidate prevention services, including suicide prevention, by giving more control to local entities. The bill would put \$2 million towards prevention efforts, to replace the many cuts that have been made to these programs. The bill passed introduction. I also supported HB168, which is the Stand Your Ground legislation designed to protect those who protect themselves. This bill is controversial, and I have not taken a final position on it, but the bill passed introduction.

I voted against introduction of the edible marihuana bill, because it would have made a felon out of someone who had possession of 3 ounces of edibles. This seemed like too harsh a penalty for such a poorly defined crime, and the bill failed.

We voted on 40 bills for introduction today; I have given you just a small sample of them. I have had some good feedback from you folks back home, and I appreciate your e-mails. If I do not respond to you, please resend, in case I missed it. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com

Thank you