

2-27-2018

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Tuesday, February 27, after a day off on Monday. Today, we voted on more than sixty House bills on third and final reading in the House. HB39 passed with my support. It will allow a license plate to be created and sold to help support efforts to protect wildlife that is crossing highways. HB163 passed with my support; it will prohibit a non-compete clause in a newly hired physician's contract. HB164 passed with my support; it eliminates the weight restriction on vehicles used for agricultural purposes. HJ05, my bill, passed; it would begin a discussion between Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, and the National Park Service to create a wildlife conservation fee in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, to help support wildlife management in the three states.

A few controversial bills were heard in third reading. HB133 passed. This bill would allow public entities to post the national motto "In God We Trust" in their buildings. Originally, the bill would have required the motto to be posted if the funds were raised, but the bill is now permissive, meaning an entity may choose to post the motto. I could support this permissive language.

HB141 passed with my support; it would eliminate the ban on concealed weapons in a place of worship. A place of worship would still have the authority to ban weapons on its private property, if it chooses. The decision should rest with the place of worship. I was worried that a place of worship could not ban a weapon, but federal case law has held that your private property right is the equal to or greater than your right to bear arms. In fact the quote out of federal case law is, "an individual's right to bear arms as enshrined in the Second Amendment, whatever its full scope, certainly must be limited by the equally fundamental right of a private property owner to exercise exclusive dominion and control over its land."

HB168 was laid back one day. This bill is the "Stand Your Ground Bill," which expands current Wyoming law with regard to self-protection. The bill states "A person who uses reasonable defensive force pursuant to W.S. 6-2-602 shall be immune from any arrest, detention, charging,

citation or prosecution for using defensive force.” The problem with this bill is that a police officer could come up on two gangs fighting, and he could not detain anyone, because they could all claim self-defense. This could eliminate law enforcement’s ability to investigate murder. I cannot support the bill as currently written, but it is my understanding the Senate has found solid language to clean up a similar bill they are working on. Law enforcement in Sublette County did not like the original bill. I will wait to see how the bill is amended going forward.

HB86 passed without my support. It would go after the fathers of Medicaid birth babies, in an attempt to get fathers to pay a share of birth costs. I support the concept behind this bill, but not its practical application. The Departments of Health and Family Services estimated it could cost the state \$1.25 million dollars to implement for a biennium, with little expectation that the money collected would let the effort break even. I can be reached at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com)

Thank you