

3-1-2018

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Thursday, March 1. Today, we started debating Senate Files, as the bills crossed from the chamber of origin to the opposite body. Senate Files I supported that passed Committee of the Whole today included funding the Legislature, creating a Women's Antelope Hunt, placing the Medicine Lodge archeological site under the administration of the Department of Parks, three bills revising insurance statutes, funding for orphan landfill remediation sites, refining excise tax audits, creating a Purple Heart Day, and redefining who is eligible for military spouse and children resident tuition.

SF25 passed Committee of the Whole with my support, but was heavily debated. This bill gave an exception to defense of habitation law for corrections officers, matching the exception for police officers. Do incarcerated individuals have the right to self-defense against a corrections officer? Inmates would still have common law right of self-defense, but would not have Castle right of self-defense. Is this bill overly broad? I voted for the bill, but might not in third reading.

SF31 passed Committee of the Whole with my support, but was heavily amended in my Appropriations Committee. This bill would create a new state nursing home facility to care for veterans. We are the only state in the nation without a federally funded veterans' skilled nursing center. The bill put in statute a new facility, authorized a Level I, II, and III construction study, and authorized construction of the facility, leaving for later the Legislature's final decisions on need, location, and funding. The Appropriations Committee amended the bill back to a Level I and II study, with a final decision on whether to build coming next session.

SF32 failed Committee of the Whole. This bill would have allowed the military department to access police investigations on prospective employees or active members. The military wanted this information to assess the character of their members before they are deployed on a mission. It is one thing to be able to access a person's convicted criminal history, but to access investigation information seems like a breach of a person's civil rights. I voted against the bill.

I was appointed to the Joint Conference Committee on the Budget Bill today, which is a very interesting process, especially when the Senate and House budgets are so far apart.

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Thank you