

3-5-2020

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on the nineteenth day of the 2020 Budget Session. We are continuing to work our way through Senate Files.

A few of the key bills I supported today on Third Reading that passed the House included:

- SF0050, Nicotine products – lawful age and penalties. This bill would raise the age for nicotine use to 21, which is consistent with the new federal law that forbids the sale of nicotine products to persons under the age of 21. An amendment was passed that reduced most of the penalties in the bill. I support this bill, which attempts to help prevent the sale and use of vapes to teenagers. I supported amendments to reduce the criminal penalties to civil penalties, because those between 18-21 years of age currently utilizing tobacco products legally would find themselves criminals. This bill was heavily debated.
- SF 57, Local government distributions. This bill, sponsored by the Joint Appropriations Committee, provides funding to cities, towns and counties and establishes local government funding formulas and distributions. The current form of this bill would provide more money to smaller towns than our previous formula, which is something I support. This bill distributes \$105 million to local governments.
- SF0020, Election code revisions. This bill was brought by the county clerks association to clean up election code. An amendment brought in Third Reading would have put in place voter ID at the polls. This amendment was challenged as not being germane to the bill, which means the amendment was thought to be unconstitutional. The Rules Committee ruled the amendment was not germane, and the sponsor appealed the decision to the whole body. The entire House then ruled the amendment was not germane, which means the amendment had to be recalled by the sponsor.

We continue to move forward with deliberations on the budget bill, and there are only three remaining issues to resolve. This includes finding a compromise on K12 education funding, community college and UW Law School funding, and where to deposit our statutory 1 percent severance tax. The House and Senate have resolved 90 percent of their differences. I serve on the Joint Conference Committee on the budget bill, which is comprised of 5 members of both the House and the Senate.

I can be reached with questions or concerns at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com).

Thank you,

Albert Sommers