

3/1/22

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on March 1. Today, we heard bills on 2nd Reading, had final vote on bills in 3rd Reading, and heard two bills in Committee of the Whole.

Today, the House had the opportunity to honor the fallen heroes of Wyoming since 9/11. We honored Lance Corporal Rylee McCollum of Jackson, Wyoming, by welcoming his father, Jim McCollum, who shared a few words with us. Rylee lost his life serving in Kabul last August. His service to this country, along with the many other Wyoming citizens who have lost their lives serving this country, will never be forgotten.

A bill of interest that passed on 3rd reading was [HB0096](#) - State Officials' Salary. This bill provides for a salary increase for the top five state elected officials. I supported this bill, because I viewed the salary increases compared to the responsibilities of these jobs to be appropriate and reasonable. As discussed before, these employees have not seen a raise since 2002. Thus, the current salaries have not been adjusted for inflation in nearly 20 years. I believe running for office should be a public service, but it is important to ensure that the salaries of these state officials are enough to support them and their families as they serve our state.

[HB0071](#) - Driving while license suspended-enhancement amendment, is a bill that I helped draft and co-sponsored. This bill ensures that drivers from other states are subject to the same enhanced penalty for driving with a suspended or cancelled license as drivers from Wyoming. The law had some ambiguity and was being administered differently by judges around the state. This was an issue brought to me by the Sublette County Attorney's office.

[SF0066](#) - American rescue plan act recovery funds appropriations. This bill appropriates money from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Appropriated money will cover COVID-related expenses that include emergency medical services, health and human services, suicide prevention, rural health clinics, broadband projects, local government support projects, and other programs that meet the eligibility requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act. This bill includes money for health care facility construction. Sublette County's proposed hospital would be an eligible project.

More than \$400 million federal dollars is appropriated through this bill, and it gives the Governor the authority to apply for an additional \$109 million.

[SF0067](#) - state-funded capital construction, sets forth appropriations for capital construction projects such as a veteran's home, improvements to the Territorial Prison, the construction of enhancements to the law enforcement academy, construction of various community college and University of Wyoming buildings, and other capital construction needs of the State. Additionally, it provides dollars necessary to maintain the State Capitol Building and grounds. This bill appropriates over \$250 million for capital construction projects.

I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com with questions and comments.