

Albert Sommers Legislative Update for January 12, 2023

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you on the third day of the 2023 General Session of the 67th Legislature. During the morning we worked through bills on Committee of the Whole. The bills we considered today that I supported include:

- [HB0009 Juvenile courts-concurrent jurisdiction clarification](#) would provide clear guidance to the court system in the instance of an adult facing a charge related to a crime committed while the offender was a juvenile. The bill outlines which courts should have a say in those cases. The bill is based on a recent Supreme Court decision and seeks to prevent future confusion.
- [HB0013 Office of guardian ad litem-program references](#) is a bill that cleans up inconsistent language throughout Wyoming law that refers to the office of guardian ad litem in different ways. The program, which is used during litigation involving children, appoints attorneys to serve as guardians and work in the best interest of a child. This bill changes the law so that all references are now the “office of guardian ad litem.”
- [HB0028 Community college capital construction](#) gives community colleges more authority to move forward with construction or renovation projects without having to check with the Community College Commission. Currently, colleges need to receive approval from the Commission before undergoing projects that cost more than \$100,000. This bill raises that limit to \$250,000 due to cost pressures with inflation

After we gavelled in for the afternoon, the House discussed the fiscal profile and the impact that the CREG report had on future budgeting. The fiscal profile is a snapshot of the state’s finances.

In stark contrast to our budget situation four years ago where we had a structural education shortfall of approximately \$300 million each year, we now find ourselves with a \$950 million surplus. The Governor is recommending that \$248 million in permanent savings be placed in the Common School Land Account. The Legislature will have to decide how to best leverage this additional funding for the benefit of future generations.

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