

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you on January 31st, the 15th day of the General Session of the 67th Legislature. This morning, we finished hearing the budget bill in Committee of the Whole and will start working through amendments on 2nd Reading tomorrow.

We spent the afternoon hearing bills in the Committee of the Whole. I will highlight three bills.

[HB0128 - Voyeurism within enclosed spaces](#). This bill was heard and passed the Committee of the Whole. This is a clean-up bill. Currently, a voyeur can only be charged if they are looking into an area where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy. This bill adds the language “or within” an area. We heard testimony that an example where the new language could be helpful is in places like locker rooms. This bill idea was brought by Sublette’s County Attorney, and I drafted and voted for this bill.

[HB0121 - Property tax deferral program-amendments](#). I have heard the concern over rising property taxes. This bill would provide relief for some who are struggling with paying their property taxes. This bill amends a current property tax deferral program that counties can administer, but to date, only Teton county has adopted rules to use the program. This bill would move program administration to the Department of Revenue, open it up for taxpayers in all 23 counties, and the state would then hold the lien, instead of the county. A taxpayer would qualify for the deferment program if they demonstrate any one of the following conditions: a limited income that is at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty line; over the age of 62; has a disability as determined by the social security administration; purchased the property at least ten years before the beginning of the tax year; or is a disabled veteran. While this program does not solve the property tax problem alone, it is another tool taxpayers have to access relief, and I lean toward supporting this bill.

[HB0099 - Property tax refund program](#). This bill would provide a tax refund to a homeowner whose income does not exceed 125 percent of the median gross household income for the applicant's county of residence or the state. This bill broadens an existing property tax refund

program for low-income homeowners. It provides very limited property tax relief, but I supported it, because it is a piece of the puzzle. I believe more property tax relief bills will be heard soon.

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