

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on February 26, the eleventh day of the 2024 Budget Session.

Today we worked amendments to several bills on 2nd Reading, including the following:

[HB52](#) - Property tax-homestead exemption is a bill I sponsored that creates a homestead exemption for primary residences. I brought this bill mainly to help seniors on fixed incomes who are particularly impacted by high property taxes. The bill gives property tax relief across the board but adds additional levels of relief for people 65 or older. The bill has been amended heavily, including today with an amendment that would create broader relief rather than more targeted tax relief for seniors. I plan to bring an amendment on third reading that will move up the effective date and make this relief available for 2024.

[HB103](#) reduces the property tax-assessment ratio for residential property taxes from 9.5% to 8.3%, if voters pass a constitutional amendment in the next election. Today an amendment pushed the adjustment out a year to 2025, giving counties and assessors time to make necessary changes as other property tax bills continue to get passed. I support this bill moving forward, but we have to ensure these various property tax bills work together and don't cause significant harm by reducing support to local government.

[HB203](#) is a property tax bill that has generated long debate. It would have removed property tax for a homeowner whose home is valued less than \$1 million by instituting a 2 cent sales tax. This bill would result in 97% of Wyoming residents not having to pay property tax. The bill was amended on 2nd Reading today and now provides less tax relief and less increased sales tax. I do not support this bill, because I believe it will further incentivize out-of-staters to move to our area to take advantage of lower property taxes, which will only increase home prices (and assessed values) in Sublette County.

[HB125](#) would repeal gun free zones. I brought an amendment that would have allowed home rule and local school districts to make the determination who can carry a gun in their schools. I believe in local control and was disappointed to see this amendment fail. However, I will vote

for the bill on 3rd Reading. I do believe this bill is more of a compromise than other bills that were similar to it in past sessions.

Tomorrow we will continue to work amendments on 2nd and 3rd Reading. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com with questions or comments.