

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on February 15, the fourth day of the 2024 Budget Session.

There is a real need for mental health crisis support in Wyoming. The needs are great and resources are thin. During the morning session, we discussed several mental health bills aimed at addressing Wyoming's ongoing mental health crisis. I voted for all of these bills on introduction. Three mental health support bills passed the required two-thirds vote for introduction.

One of the bills that passed today, [HB186](#), allocates 40 million dollars into a trust fund to support the 988 suicide hotline. The 988 hotline is a crucial resource providing trained Wyoming counselors to answer calls from individuals in crisis.

Another bill that passed introduction was [HB144](#), which creates a mental health specialty license plate that residents can voluntarily purchase. This option would give them the chance to invest in statewide mental health crisis services.

The third bill, [HB169](#), focuses on continuing the work of the mental health and vulnerable adults task force, which is responsible for studying and developing programs to address unmet mental health needs.

Unfortunately, a bill I sponsored, [HB119](#), failed to meet the required threshold for introduction. This bill aimed to help Wyoming schools access the mental health resources necessary for Wyoming school children.

[House Bill 203](#), the property tax reduction and replacement act, was introduced with my support. This would effectively mean that only those homeowners whose homes are worth over a million dollars will be required to pay residential property tax. To keep Wyoming counties and schools that rely on property taxes whole, there would be an offset of a two percent sales tax increase. This bill would shift local government funding from property tax on residential homes to sales tax. A significant amount of sales tax is paid by out-of-staters, which would reduce the tax burden for residents. The bill needs work, perhaps more than can occur during this session.

The bill's introduction allows us to further discuss and evaluate the idea. I am still undecided about my final vote on this bill.

The House also commenced hearing [House Bill 1](#), which is the budget bill, and we will continue the introduction tomorrow.

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