

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on February 27, the twelfth day of the 2024 Budget Session.

Today we worked bills on third reading and continued robust debate on several bills.

[HB125](#), which repeals gun-free zones, passed the House with overwhelming support and now moves to the Senate. Yesterday, I proposed an amendment for home rule, but it was rejected. However, an amendment today allows local school districts to determine staff training parameters for concealed weapons permits. With these amendments, I voted in favor of the bill.

[HB203](#) is a property tax bill that generated long debate and had many amendments. The bill would have removed property tax for a homeowner whose home is valued less than \$1 million, by increasing sales tax by two cents. The bill was complex and would have made some significant changes to tax policies. While the bill failed, it was a good and important debate on tax policy. I voted against the bill because I believe it would have resulted in a flood of people from outside Wyoming into our county trying to avoid property taxes, which would further drive up home prices in our beautiful valley.

[HB52](#) was heard on third and final reading today, and this was my bill. Originally it featured staggered levels of relief primarily aimed at seniors who are living on limited incomes and struggling to keep up with the severe increases in property taxes in the state. An amendment in second reading cast a wider net to provide relief to a larger group of Wyoming people. I brought an amendment to make this bill provide tax relief immediately, in 2024. The original bill would have taken the Department of Revenue a year to implement. This bill would backfill local government losses through a state appropriation. This would ensure our towns and counties can still function and not have to reduce critical services, while providing critical tax relief to Wyoming citizens.

[HB60](#) also passed the House today, with my support. The bill creates a new category of extraordinary damage to grass by elk on private lands, if populations of elk are over objective.

The bill requires the Game and Fish Department to reimburse landowners based upon private land lease rates for the affected area. I worked with Representative Crago, the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association, and Jesse Johnson with the Wyoming Wildlife Federation to find a compromise amendment that seemed to make everyone comfortable with the bill.

Tomorrow we will continue to introduce Senate Files and work bills on Second and Third Reading. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com with questions or comments.