



The legislature's first week kicks off with the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the State of the Tribes giving us the lowdown on what's happening in the State. Then, in the second week, the Committees step up their game, meeting more often and catching up on updates from state agencies.

In this session, I serve on three Senate committees: Education, State Affairs, and Vice-Chair of Health and Human Services.

The Majority Leaders in the Senate and House have set a goal for the legislature to be even more productive during the session's early weeks, and several bills have already been passed.

One of the first bills the Senate passed was to strengthen the protection of our free and fair elections. With bi-partisan support, the Senate passed SB 20. The bill makes it a class one misdemeanor to threaten an election official or worker intending to influence an election improperly. The bill now goes to the House.

The Senate overwhelmingly approved SB 1, making K-12 school counselors eligible for the same reduced tuition credits at our public universities. This would extend the program's eligibility, including teachers and state employees. The House will take up the bill next.

One of the ways bills come before the legislature is by working with our state agencies. The Department of Health requested changes to SB 42, a medical cannabis bill focusing on practical cleanup. Notably, it adds cardholders to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) list, enhancing patient safety and fostering communication among healthcare providers. The goal is to address potential interactions between prescribed medications and medical cannabis. The bill is now under consideration by the House Health and Human Services Committee.

In a move to bolster safeguards for local outdoors enthusiasts, SB 54 changes hunting and fishing residency requirements. These adjustments aim to provide stronger protections for our State's outdoorsmen and women, ensuring a safer and more enjoyable outdoor experience for all.

The Senate also confirmed appointments to the Board of Regents this week. Congratulations to James Lochner, Dakota Dunes, and Randall Rasmussen, Vermillion. Lochner has worked with Tyson Foods and has been an active member of the American Meat Institute and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. As an alumnus of the University of South Dakota, Rasmussen has been an active member of the Vermillion community and believes in the importance of civic involvement.

The legislature also welcomes many visitors from different organizations. This past week, the legislature welcomed 4-H representatives. It's an excellent opportunity for the students to experience our state government. We have a very open and accessible State government, and I encourage you to consider visiting Pierre during the session. I have details about planning a visit to our capital city on my website at <https://votesydneydavis.com/visiting-pierre>

As your representative in Pierre, your opinions, questions, and concerns about our State's business are very important to me.

Because of the volume of emails legislators receive, I prioritize emails from District 17 residents. You can help out by including where you live in your email. Contact me at Sydney.Davis@sdlegislature.gov.