



We have completed 21 days of the 38-day session for 2023. This year we'll consider 221 Senate proposals and 259 House proposals. The goal of the majority in the Senate is to advance an agenda that propels South Dakota forward with advancements in education, economic development, workforce, fiscal responsibility, and election integrity.

Much work goes into the bills that are heard in the legislature. Sometimes it's unclear why a good bill doesn't move forward. That happened this past week with HB 1169, which would further define what life of the mother entails in our current abortion trigger law. The full title is an act to authorize the performance and reporting of medical procedures to avert a pregnant female's death or physical impairment and to declare an emergency. Last summer's U.S. Supreme Court decision on Dobbs returned decision-making on abortion law to the states. South Dakota had a trigger law that took effect with the Dobbs decision. However, there is still need to be clarified to practice medicine effectively within the law's guidelines. Doctors taking care of women during pregnancy need to understand how they can legally take care of pregnant women and their babies when things take a turn for the worse.

Representative Taylor Rehfeldt, Senator Erin Tobin, and I worked with stakeholders on HB1169 to clarify what the life and health of the mother meant. We modeled the bill based on the previous language that defined medical emergencies and had been law for 30 years before the trigger law. However, this bill was tabled in House Health and Human Services.

HB 1169 is a pro-life, pro-women bill. We intend to bring the bill again for consideration next session. We had an opportunity to talk about this on the Dakota Town Hall podcast.

It was a busy week for Senate Education Committee. SB 118 passed unanimously out of Senate Education and would add Pre-K teachers to the tuition reduction program (previously was just K-12). This is an outstanding bill to help recruit and retain teachers in vital Pre-K programs. The bill will now go to Joint Appropriations for further discussion.

During the Governor's State of the State address, she proposed starting a scholarship program specifically to assist children in the foster care program. The committee defeated SB 100, which created the program with \$15 million. While the intent to help foster kids is great, there are better ways than starting a new government program. I would have rather seen the funds get allocated to the Department of Social Services, the agency that oversees the foster care program and used to support kids and foster families.

The Senate Health and Human Services Committee considered and passed HB1080, a bill that would put a moratorium on transgender surgery and hormones for minors. Medical professionals make decisions considering what is in the patient's best long-term interest - providing patient-centered care with a treatment plan that considers the needs of today and balances that against the effects that will be felt for years to come.

As a legislator, one of my most important roles is to protect the vulnerable. The treatments outlined in HB1080 have long-term consequences. We don't yet understand or appreciate how they will affect a child's still-developing body.

We heard testimony from individuals who had undergone surgery, regretted it later, and noted that it severely affected their quality of life and left them suicidal even after surgical intervention. Suicide is a huge problem for these young people, and we will continue to promote mental health access for every minor.

I am committed to supporting these at-risk children and their families. As we continue this discussion, I sincerely hope that we can treat our transgender families with love and respect as we work to have a greater understanding of the science and long-term consequences behind these procedures.

HB 1080 also passed the full Senate.

Part of the work in the legislature is considering measures that make a lasting impact on the lives of South Dakotans. I'm honored to be able to represent you as we consider

these issues. I depend on your opinions, questions, and concerns about our State's business.

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.