



We've now completed 25 days of the 38-day legislative session.

Next week is "cross-over" day which means all work on bills has to be completed in the body they were introduced, so a bill introduced in the Senate, those designated with the SB, have to be passed by the full Senate and the same goes for House bills or HB.

This past week, the Senate finished work on HB1041. This is an important step forward in battling the overdose deaths linked to fentanyl. The bill makes it legal to possess fentanyl test strips. According to news stories, overdose deaths have increased more than 130% just in the Sioux Falls area. Drug dealers lace drugs with fentanyl to make them more potent. However, it takes a tiny amount to make it lethal. Thanks to work raising awareness by professors at the University of South Dakota, people struggling with addiction can carry test strips that can save their lives. HB1041 now goes to the Governor for her signature. Learn more about the efforts here: <https://www.keloland.com/news/investigates/life-saving-tool-for-overdose-epidemic-illegal-in-sd/>

Some of the other bills the Senate completed this past week include SB76, which will make it easier for people with professional licenses in other states to work in South Dakota. Governor Noem has said we have 23,000 open jobs in our State. The need for more qualified people to fill positions in South Dakota is a real problem. Removing barriers only makes good economic sense. Other states with policies similar to SB76 have seen growth in their workforce almost immediately. The bill is scheduled for a hearing on February 22 in the House Commerce and Energy Committee.

This week the Senate also passed changes to South Dakota law intended to help victims of rape. In 2019, a jury asked a Judge to define consent. The Judge told them he could not because there wasn't a definition in law. SB90 addresses that gap in the law.

Before SB91, saying 'no' or 'stop' was not enough to meet the standard to prosecute a crime. SB91 adds the definition of sex without consent to South Dakota's laws for prosecuting rape. SB91 will help rape victims that did not consent to sex or were incapacitated and taken advantage of receive the justice they deserve while preserving the rights of the defendant. The House Judiciary Committee is now considering the bills.

Occasionally, a bill is withdrawn from consideration because the issue was solved without needing to change the law. That happened this week with SB106. The bill would have extended Medicaid coverage for postpartum care from 60 days to 12 months. Any mother knows it takes longer than two months to recover from having a baby. Working with the bill's sponsor, the Governor's office made changes to the program that will take care of these new mothers. South Dakota voters approved the expansion of Medicaid last November; expanding care for new mothers and their babies is putting into practice the improved care voters supported.

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](mailto:Sydney.Davis@sdlegislature.gov).