



As I write this, we are approaching the final week of the 99th legislative session. Our final regular day is March 7th, and then we'll reconvene on March 25th for "Veto Day" if the Governor chooses to Veto any of the bills.

Legislation only sometimes results in new laws. Sometimes, a bill can prompt discussions to solve an issue without having to pass legislation. An example of that happening this past week is SB 125. The bill would have required the Department of Social Services (DSS) to conduct a study on child care and the real problems facing South Dakota parents. Parents are having difficulty finding available and affordable child care; at the same time, childcare centers are closing because they aren't able to operate the business.

In working with the DSS, it was determined that SB 125 wasn't necessary to understand the difficulties in the childcare industry. With a new direction based on constructive conversations, DSS will build on its work for our state by looking at child care from an economic perspective. The agency will collect data to help develop solutions to address childcare issues in South Dakota. We aim to ensure parents can work without having problems finding child care. This data will help us find new solutions that DSS might not usually work on. How we figure out costs and what questions we can answer are important. The childcare task force should help us come up with key questions. Our goal is to answer these pressing questions or find new questions to explore. Thanks to the productive conversations with DSS, the Senate tabled SB 125.

This week, the Senate passed SB 80 to improve technology for elderly care providers. The bill was developed due to work done by the Long-Term Care Summer Study to provide equipment to community-based service to help

staff be more efficient with their time, which will also ease workforce shortage issues faced by long-term care facilities. The bill has now gone to the House. Another bill from the Summer Study was to use some of the remaining ARPA dollars to upgrade telemedicine technology and provide patients with better access to treatment.

The Senate Education Committee advanced HB 1048, which revises requirements on average teacher pay and sets a minimum teacher salary. The bill next goes to the full Senate.

Also this week, the Senate passed HB 1224. The bill requires the Department of Health to work with the attorney general, medical and legal experts to make a video on South Dakota's trigger law that took effect after the US Supreme Court's Dobbs decision. SD's trigger law stopped abortions, except if the mom's life was in danger. HB 1224 aims to bring clarity and help doctors understand the trigger law.

The training video will be shared with health care providers and will be available online for the public through the Dept of Health website. It will allow health care providers to review their policies and educate their employees. We will work together to ensure moms and babies get the best care. The health of women and babies in South Dakota is paramount to families and communities. Education is the best method for movement forward.

This week, the Capitol was home to the 2024 South Dakota Student Research Poster Session this week. Grant Budden, a student at USD, was one of ten students invited to participate and present their research in an exhibit in the Capitol's Rotunda. Grant is a senior majoring in Medical Biology. His research examined an element that could increase the threat to South Dakota False Map Turtles in water environments. Congratulations to Grant for his hard work and well-earned honor.

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.

