



As the 98th Legislative Session draws to an end, I'm proud to say there was a lot of work accomplished on issues important to South Dakota. Many of the bills we worked on were drafted with the central goal of helping our rural communities and our most vulnerable citizens. That speaks to the heart of what makes our state stand out. We care about and care for each other.

The three committees I served on - Education, State Affairs, and Health and Human Services - were central to the legislation I worked on during the Session.

One of the biggest successes for education this Session was the 7% increase in funding for schools included in the budget. This is one of the most significant increases for our school districts and speaks to our high priority on supporting our schools. We also expanded support for recruiting and retaining teachers in our Pre-K programs. We also provided critical support for our post-high school students by freezing tuition at our public universities and tech schools for a third year, keeping those costs low, and increasing the amount of support to students through the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarships encouraging our South Dakota students to stay in state.

For the State Affairs committee, we put a lot of focus on our state's election laws. We are fortunate that South Dakota already has some of the strongest laws in the country protecting our voting process. We took steps to improve that good foundation, including setting standards for testing equipment and auditing results. We also established penalties for using public funds to influence elections.

A few weeks ago, we discussed ensuring we did our best to allow our properly trained healthcare workforce to practice in all parts of the state. We made real progress by supporting establishing a community paramedic standard,

expanding our rural recruitment assistance to include more healthcare professions, and supporting our community service providers and adult day services. The budget included increased funding for Medicaid providers, which will be very helpful for facilities in small communities and help keep care closer to home.

We'll return to Pierre for Veto Day at the end of the month to finish up any remaining work from this Session and start laying the groundwork for this year's summer studies and continuing work on issues that weren't resolved during the Session.

Thank you for being so supportive. I appreciate my family, friends, and members of the community who make it possible for me to represent you in Pierre. I value your insights and opinions. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns at sydney.davis@sdlegislature.gov. You can also get in touch through my website, votesydneydavis.com. You'll find information about how our state government works and about visiting our state capitol.