

Week 3 of the 2024 Wyoming legislative was consumed with amendments to the FY25-26 budget bill, while the Legislature made some initial decisions about how to give property tax relief to homeowners.

Week 4 digs into bills that have passed one chamber, and opponents and supporters get another chance to weigh in as the bills go through committees and three floor debates.

The House and Senate budget versions will be considered by the other chamber, of course, rejected and then referred to a conference committee to work out a compromise version. That will be a trick, given the \$900 million difference (House outspending the Senate) and the budget priorities that sum represents. The \$10.8 billion House version includes several capital construction projects, including school buildings and projects that were in HB135 (failed introduction by 5 votes). Senate leaders claim a “conservative” budget.

Consult the [Legislative Service Office's](#) (LSO) home page for the 2024 session schedules, including Senate and House floor daily calendars and committee meetings. Also, consult Bill Tracker 50, an online platform LWV Wyoming uses for bill management and monitoring. The state board has identified three priorities for our 2024 focus: Constitutional Issues, Election and Voter Services, Government Accountability and Transparency. The [LWVWY 2024 Bill Tracker](#) includes bill information and the LWV Wyoming’s position (support, oppose, monitor). The Bill Tracker can also be found on the [LWVWY home page](#).

As expected, second-reading amendments on Monday and third-reading amendments on Wednesday and Thursday dominated the week and kept legislators at the Capitol into the night. They extended the General File (initial full chamber debate) by one day, but several bills missed that deadline. In total, 205 of the 366 bills written for the session never made it out of their home chamber. Among the measures stranded on General File were two opposed by LWVWY: SJ5 constitutional amendment to make school construction a local responsibility and HB38 to impose an additional 30-day residential requirement to vote.

Every budget amendment (and its ultimate fate) is listed in the bill “digests” for HB1 and SF1. Several have roll call votes. Hundreds of amendments included significant program priorities and bills that failed earlier in the session. The amendments also reflected governing and social grievances carried to the Capitol from home districts, mostly targeting budgets for the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Business Council. The budget included permission for the Board of Land Commissioners to sell the famed school trust “Kelly Parcel” for conservation inside Grand Teton National Park. Debate tried unsuccessfully to link that disposition to a controversial Bureau of Land Management plan for the Rock Springs area.

Members appointed by the Senate president and House speaker will meet in a conference committee to work out a compromise version. Similar House and Senate amendments are locked into that version. Other differences are negotiable, although conferees are committed to defending their chambers' decisions as much as possible. Meeting times are unpredictable, but the LSO typically tries to post and stream them online. The conference committee does not take public comment, but of course, you may contact members directly.

The House got through four major tax reform bills on General File on Friday and will continue consideration through second and third reading this week. They include HB134, HB52, HB103, and the innovative HB203, which would virtually eliminate single-family residence property tax and replace the revenue with a 2-cent statewide sales tax. The 90-minute debate on General File Friday afternoon is a good tutorial on how it would work. HB203 advanced to a second reading by a slim 31-29.