



In South Dakota, we take pride in our citizen legislature, which only meets in session less than 40 days each year. But not surprisingly, the business of governing the state continues year-round. While most of the attention shifts to the Executive branch and the Governor's office, your elected legislators are still busy at work. Our Legislative Branch plays an important role in enacting laws and overseeing the executive branch's actions — a function we learned in government class in school known commonly as "checks and balances" between the three branches of government.

During the "off-season," several committees continue their work, and several special committees are formed to study a particular issue in depth, for which we use the easy and descriptive name "Summer Studies."

Taking the lead in keeping the legislature on track is the Executive Committee (E-Board). Their duties include:

- Research and collection of information on our state government.
- The general welfare of the state.
- Judicial opinions and their impact on the state.

The E-Board will use the findings to make recommendations concerning public policy and the state's interests. They also prepare materials and issues to be presented to the legislature by making recommendations, proposing bills, and appointing committees to consider various policy issues. Additionally, the E-board conducts oversight of the Executive branch. Their involvement in policy development and oversight enhances the efficiency and integrity of the legislative process and helps provide the best possible state government for South Dakota.

During an E-Board meeting in May, the members heard a report from the South Dakota Investment Council (SDIC). The SDIC Board oversees the management of the South Dakota Retirement System (SDRS), the School and Public Lands Fund, which benefits

our public schools, and the South Dakota Cash Flow Fund, which serves as the state checking account and other state trust funds. With the SDRS making up more than 70% of the assets under their management, it's significant for retirees who depend on those funds to have confidence in the SDIC. The Council reported a return on the SDRS funds for FY2023 to be 4.15%. In their report to the Executive Board, the SDIC points to their long-term focus as a key to protecting the state's funds through more difficult economic times.

The E-Board also approved appointments to committees and commissions. Two District 17 residents were selected to serve the state. Thomas Simmons of Vermillion, a USD School of Law professor, was appointed to the Uniform Legislation Commission (ULC). The commission promotes the principle of uniformity of state laws where desirable. The ULC can only make recommendations. It is then up to the entire legislature to decide if we will adopt the ULC's recommendation.

Assistant USD professor, Katie Kassin, was appointed to the Medical Marijuana Oversight Committee, which is charged with evaluating and making recommendations regarding the ability to qualify patients to access medical cannabis and other matters related to the industry and patient care. The oversight committee comprises legislators, licensed medical personnel, law enforcement, professional counselors, and a qualifying patient. Kassin was selected to fill the seat on the committee to be held by a Physician Assistant. Appointees to the oversight committee will serve terms of two years, and the appointments will be effective July 1, 2023. Kassin will be a valuable resource for the committee because of her background with the USD Physician Assistant program and familiarity with the research on the use of marijuana in patient care.

Congratulations to Thomas Simmons and Katie Kassin.

The state of the Long Term Care industry is a critical issue facing many of our communities across the state. This summer, I'm participating in a Study Committee reviewing sustainable models for Long Term Care. Our first meeting in May took place in Pierre and included a presentation on the state's current status of long-term care. It's available for review <https://sdlegislature.gov/Interim/Committee/469/HearingDocuments>.

Stakeholders from across the state gave testimony and provided further insight into issues and contributing factors in the long-term care crisis. Our committee will be breaking into smaller workgroups to work closely with stakeholders and work towards targeted solutions. I'll lead the workgroup focusing on innovation to help provide

quality and cost-effective services and their practicality and then prioritizes potential innovations for implementation. Our next meeting will be on June 12 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.