Letter To The Editor: Freedom Caucus Wants To Weaken Public Education

*Gillette resident Christy Gerrits wrote a fantastic letter to the editor over on the **Gillette News Record** about some of the insane education bills currently on the house floor and she wanted to share it far and wide. Here is what she wrote.*


Public
Education
Matters

I think we can all agree that we have a wonderful school system here in Wyoming, which is the envy of many states. Then why, I ask you, is the Freedom Caucus working so hard to cut our education off at the knees?

Two of the most egregious bills are HB100 and HB199.

HB100 lets anybody with a high school degree who can pass a background check teach in our schools. This flies in the face of years of working to get highly qualified teachers in our classrooms. I understand that there's a lack of teachers in Wyoming, but the solution is not lowering the qualifications. Instead, it should be making the job of a teacher more desirable with higher wages. There are already programs in place where people with a college degree are able to teach while getting their teacher's certification. Do you really want to hand your child over to a glorified babysitter?

HB199 will divert 47% of our public education dollars to pay for private or home school education tuition. This bill removes income restrictions, so anybody can claim a $7,000 voucher to homeschool their children. There is no accountability on how the money is spent, or the progress the student makes, no assessment, or standards of learning.

For educators and librarians, HB194 removes the exemptions to being subjected to criminal prosecution under obscenity statutes. Some of our teachers and librarians have been accused of using obscene materials to teach Greek and Roman mythology, classical art and the Holocaust. Only the legislature can deem something actually obscene.

Please speak out about these bills to our representatives! Let them know that you do not support the bills. You can find contact information on each legislator at ***wyoleg.gov****.*

Christy Gerrits

Gillette

Learn more about these bills:

HB0100 – K-12 uncertified personnel – AN ACT relating to education; allowing school districts and charter schools to adopt policies to employ persons without holding a certificate or permit issued by the Wyoming professional teaching standards board; specifying requirements for the adoption of policies; authorizing school districts and charter schools to obtain criminal histories and request fingerprinting; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date.

- **Sponsored by**:
  - **Representative Andrew Byron** (R – Lincoln & Teton Counties)
  - **Representative Laurie Bratten** (R – Sheridan County)
  - **Representative Joel Guggenmos** (R – Fremont County)
  - **Representative Jeremy Haroldson** (R – Laramie & Platte Counties)
  - **Representative Scott Heiner** (R – Lincoln, Sweetwater & Uinta Counties)
  - **Representative Tom Kelly** (R – Sheridan County)
  - **Representative Chip Neiman** (R – Crook & Weston Counties)
  - **Representative Daniel Singh** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Tomi Strock** (R – Converse County)
  - **Senator Bo Biteman** (R – Sheridan County)
  - **Senator Evie Brennan** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Senator John Kolb** (R – Sweetwater County)
  - **Senator Charles Scott** (R – Natrona County)

HB0199 Wyoming Freedom Scholarship Act – AN ACT relating to education; modifying the education savings accounts program; changing the name of the program to the Wyoming freedom scholarship act; creating the Wyoming freedom scholarship program account; modifying distribution of state funds; modifying definitions; increasing the maximum scholarship award; modifying eligibility requirements; repealing provisions; providing appropriations; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date.

- **Sponsored by**:
  - **Representative Ocean Andrew** (R – Albany County)
  - **Representative Abby Angelos** (R – Campbell County)
  - **Representative John Bear** (R – Campbell County)
  - **Representative Marlene Brady** (R – Sweetwater County)
  - **Representative Gary Brown** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Lee Filer** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Jeremy Haroldson** (R – Laramie & Platte Counties)
  - **Representative Scott Heiner** (R – Lincoln, Sweetwater & Uinta Counties)
  - **Representative Paul Hoeft** (R – Park County)
  - **Representative Christopher Knapp** (R – Campbell County)
  - **Representative Jayme Lien** (R – Natrona County)
  - **Representative Ann Lucas** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Chip Neiman** (R – Crook & Weston Counties)
  - **Representative Pepper Ottman** (R – Fremont County)
  - **Representative J.R. Riggins** (R – Natrona County)
  - **Representative Rachel Rodriguez-Williams** (R – Park County)
  - **Representative Daniel Singh** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Scott Smith** (R – Goshen County)

- **Representative Joe Webb** (R – Uinta County)
- **Representative Nina Webber** (R – Park County)
- **Representative Robert Wharff** (R – Uinta County)
- **Representative John Winter** (R – Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs & Park Counties)
- **Senator Bo Biteman** (R – Sheridan County)
- **Senator Brian Boner** (R – Converse & Natrona Counties)
- **Senator Evie Brennan** (R – Laramie County)
- **Senator John Kolb** (R – Sweetwater County)
- **Senator Dan Laursen** (R – Big Horn & Park Counties)
- **Senator Jared Olsen** (R – Laramie County)
- **Senator Laura Pearson** (R – Lincoln, Sublette, Sweetwater & Uinta Counties)
- **Senator Charles Scott** (R – Natrona County)
- **Senator Darin Smith** (R – Laramie & Platte Counties)
- **Senator Cheri Steinmetz** (R – Goshen, Niobrara & Weston Counties)

HB0194 Obscenity Amendments – AN ACT relating to crimes and offenses; creating the crime of promoting obscenity to minors; amending the crime of promoting obscenity as specified; providing and amending definitions; repealing an exemption from the crime of promoting obscenity for activities conducted in the course of employment at a school, college, university, museum or public library; repealing obsolete provisions; and providing for an effective date.

- **Sponsored by**:
  - **Representative Ann Lucas** (R – Laramie County)
  - **Representative Ocean Andrew** (R – Albany County)
  - **Representative Abby Angelos** (R – Campbell County)

- **Representative John Bear** (R – Campbell County)
- **Representative Marlene Brady** (R – Sweetwater County)
- **Representative Gary Brown** (R – Laramie County)
- **Representative Kevin Campbell** (R –
- **Representative Joel Guggenmos** (R – Fremont County)
- **Representative Scott Heiner** (R – Lincoln, Sweetwater & Uinta Counties)
- **Representative Paul Hoeft** (R – Park County)
- **Representative Steve Johnson** (R – Laramie County)
- **Representative Jayme Lien** (R – Natrona County)
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- **Representative Jacob Wasserburger** (R – Laramie County)
- **Representative Joe Webb** (R – Uinta County)
- **Representative Robert Wharff** (R – Uinta County)
- **Senator Lynn Hutchings** (R – Laramie County)
- **Senator Dan Laursen** (R – Big Horn & Park Counties)
- **Senator Laura Pearson** (R – Lincoln, Sublette, Sweetwater & Uinta Counties)
- **Senator Darin Smith** (R – Laramie & Platte Counties)
- **Senator Cheri Steinmetz** (R – Goshen, Niobrara & Weston Counties)