

# Wyoming Legislature Democrats Weekly Newsletter 02.03.25

This week at the Wyoming State House has been dark and alarming. We are witnessing an all-out assault on women's reproductive rights, an attack on the right of trans people to exist, and a disturbing focus on national political talking points instead of the pressing issues facing our state. Instead of working on real solutions for Wyomingites, the Legislature is bent on passing ideological bills that serve outside interests at the expense of our communities. Meanwhile, the Freedom Caucus is pushing economic policies that threaten to plunge Wyoming into financial chaos, prioritizing their national agenda over the economic stability of our state. We must stay vigilant, fight back, and ensure that the voices of the people—not the whims of extremist politicians—shape the future of Wyoming.

## Highlights & Video Clips

**Rep Yin Questions JAC's Lack of Maternity Care Prioritization:** Rep. Yin highlights Wyoming's maternal care desert and challenges the JAC's failure to prioritize funding, while Rep. Bear dismisses the issue, arguing OB/GYNs are leaving for reasons unrelated to legislative action. Watch here.

**Ken Chestek Breaks Down HB 164:** Rep. Chestek explains the implications of HB 164, which claims to codify off-label prescription use, but actually seeks to limit prescribing medications for abortions or transition care. Watch here.

**Harshman Warns of a \$200 Million Shortfall:** During a discussion on the Legislative Reserve Stabilization Account (LRSA), Rep. Harshman breaks down Wyoming's looming \$200 million Coal Severance revenue drop. Watch here.

**Bear says it plainly, Tax Cuts or Schools:** Rep. John Bear, speaking shockingly honestly, states that Wyoming must choose between tax cuts and funding schools, acknowledging that the proposed tax cuts will drain the state's rainy day fund. Watch here.

**Pendergraft Opposes Accountability for State Education Dollars:** In an alarming statement, Pendergraft argues that parents should be able to educate their children however they want with no oversight, because "they own them." Watch here.

## Legislation Breakdown

HOUSE BILLS

**HB 232: Elections-Hand Counting for Recounts**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Haroldson, Allemand, Banks, Bear, Brady, Erickson, Knapp, Locke, McCann, Schmid, Strock, Webb, Williams, and Senators Boner, Hutchings, Kolb, Pearson, Smith.*

This bill would force all election recounts to be conducted manually, rather than using reliable, efficient machines. By introducing unnecessary delays and increasing the risk of human error, this legislation threatens to undermine the integrity and efficiency of Wyoming's electoral process.

**Status: Passed the House on January 30, 2025, and received in the Senate for introduction on January 31, 2025.**

**HB 102: Attorney General – Elected**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Heiner, Allemand, Banks, Bear, Haroldson, Knapp, Lucas, Pendergraft, Webber, Winter, and Senators Boner, Kolb, Laursen, Pearson, Steinmetz.*

This bill seeks to make the Wyoming Attorney General an elected position rather than an appointed one. Instead of ensuring impartiality in legal matters, this move would politicize the office and make it susceptible to partisan influence, compromising the integrity of the state's legal system.

**Status: Introduced and referred to the House Judiciary Committee for further consideration.**

**HB 131: Ballot Drop Boxes Prohibition**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Knapp, Angelos, Neiman, Ottman, Rodriguez-Williams, Webb, Wharff, Winter, and Senators Hutchings, Ide, Kolb, Laursen, Steinmetz.*

This bill is a blatant attack on voting access, banning the use of ballot drop boxes for absentee voting. By making it harder for residents—especially rural voters, the elderly, and those with disabilities—to cast their ballots, this legislation suppresses voter participation under the guise of election security.

**Status: Introduced and referred to the House Corporations Committee.**

**HB 164: Medical Prescriptions – Off-Label Purposes**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Brown, Allemand, Guggenmos, Haroldson, Johnson, Kelly, Lien, Lucas, Neiman, Ottman, Pendergraft, Schmid, Strock, Wasserburger, and Senators Hutchings, Ide.*

This bill would 'allow' healthcare providers to prescribe medications for off-label uses, a practice that is already in use, but actually bans prescribing drugs for abortion and transition care; this bill prioritizes ideology over science, opening the door to unproven treatments with no oversight.

**Status: Introduced and referred to the House Labor Committee.**

**HB 177: Statutory Standing Committee – Federal Review**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Allemand, Bear, Brown, Guggenmos, Johnson, Neiman, Pendergraft, Webber, Wharff, Winter, and Senators Ide, Laursen, McKeown.*

This bill creates a state-level committee to "review" federal laws, a thinly veiled attempt to undermine necessary federal policies and further isolate Wyoming from national governance. This is a waste of taxpayer money and a distraction from the real issues facing the state.

**Status: Passed its second reading in the House and is awaiting further consideration.**

**HB 207: Religious Freedom Restoration Act**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Washut, Banks, Heiner, Lawley, Locke, Neiman, Rodriguez-Williams, Zwonitzer, and Senators Boner, Landen, Hutchings, Ide, Laursen, Salazar.*

This bill disguises itself as a protection of religious freedom but is in reality a dangerous attempt to legalize discrimination. It will allow individuals and businesses to deny services and rights to others under the pretense of religious beliefs, harming LGBTQ+ individuals, women, and marginalized communities.

**Status: Introduced and referred to the House Judiciary Committee.**

**HB 64: Chemical Abortions – Ultrasound Requirement**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Neiman, Allemand, Angelos, Brown, Geringer, Rodriguez-Williams, Strock, and Senators Dockstader, Steinmetz.*

This bill mandates that women seeking a chemical abortion must undergo an ultrasound at least 48 hours before the procedure. It is a blatant attempt to create unnecessary barriers to reproductive healthcare, making it harder for Wyoming residents to access critical services.

**Status: It passed the House and was sent to the Senate, where it will be heard in committee.**

**HB 17: Career Technical Education Equipment Grants Amendments**

*Sponsored by: Joint Education Committee.*

This bill will allow small towns to more easily access funds to establish and update career technical education (CTE) programs, providing greater access to pathways for good, well-paying jobs for Wyoming students.

**Status: It passed the House and was sent to the Senate, where it will be heard in committee.**

**HB 32: What is a Woman Act**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Lien, Allemand, Angelos, Bear, Brady, Campbell, Guggenmos, Heiner, Hoeft, McCann, Pendergraft, Webb, and Senator Pearson.*

This bill is a cruel and unnecessary attack on transgender Wyomingites, seeking to define male and female based solely on sex assigned at birth. This dangerous legislation does nothing to help Wyoming and only serves to spread discrimination.

**Status: It passed its 3rd reading in the House and was sent to the Senate for consideration.**

**HB 42: Regulation of Surgical Abortions**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Lawley, Angelos, Geringer, Haroldson, Heiner, Larson, Lien, Rodriguez-Williams, and Senators Boner, Brennan, Olsen, Steinmetz.*

This bill is another calculated attack on reproductive healthcare in Wyoming, imposing unnecessary restrictions on surgical abortion providers. It will make access to critical OB/GYN services even more difficult, further endangering the health of women in Wyoming.

**Status: It passed its 3rd reading in the House and was sent to the Senate for consideration.**

**HB 80: Stop ESG-State Funds Fiduciary Duty Act**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Knapp, Angelos, Banks, Bear, Haroldson, Neiman, Singh, Tarver, Webb, Winter, and Senator Steinmetz.*

This bill is yet another ideological attack on responsible investment. By prohibiting the state from considering environmental, social, and governance factors, it limits our ability to make sound financial decisions that ensure Wyoming's long-term prosperity.

**Status: It passed its 3rd reading in the House and was sent to the Senate for consideration.**

**HB 199: Wyoming Freedom Scholarship Act**

*Sponsored by: Representatives Ocean Andrew, Abby Angelos, John Bear, Marlene Brady, Gary Brown, Lee Filer, Jeremy Haroldson, Scott Heiner, Paul Hoeft, Christopher Knapp, Jayme Lien, Ann Lucas, Darin McCann, Chip Neiman, Pepper Ottman, J.R. Riggins, Rachel Rodriguez-Williams, Daniel Singh, Scott Smith, Joe Webb, Nina Webber, Robert Wharff, John Winter, and Senators Bo Biteman, Brian Boner, Evie Brennan, John Kolb, Dan Laursen, Jared Olsen, Laura Pearson, Charles Scott, Darin Smith, Cheri Steinmetz.*

This bill is a direct attack on public education in Wyoming, diverting nearly half of federal mineral royalties away from public schools to fund private education. Instead of investing in our students and teachers, this bill prioritizes private interests over the future of our children.

**Status: It passed its 3rd reading in the House and was sent to the Senate for consideration.**

**SENATE FILES****SF 62: Restrooms in Publicly Funded Schools**

*Sponsored by: Senators Laursen, Boner, Brennan, French, Ide, Olsen, Salazar, Smith, and Representatives Banks, Bear, Heiner, Hoeft, Knapp, Ottman, Pendergraft, Rodriguez-Williams, Webber, Wharff, Winter.*

This bill mandates that students in public schools use restrooms and locker rooms that align with their sex assigned at birth. This is a direct attack on the rights and dignity of transgender students, creating an exclusionary and harmful school environment. Instead of focusing on real educational needs, this bill prioritizes discrimination over student well-being.

***Status: Passed the Senate and has been sent to the House for consideration.***

**Fighting Forward**

**This is a dark moment, but we have seen dark moments before, and we have overcome them. We will stand strong for reproductive rights, for LGBTQ+ individuals, for fair economic policies, and for a Wyoming that serves its people—not outside interests. They want us to feel hopeless, but we will fight back. The future belongs to those who refuse to surrender to fear.**

**Stay strong. Stay engaged. Stay fighting.**

**We will be doing that here at the Legislature.**

**-Tanner Ewalt**

**Communications Director, Wyoming Legislature Democrats**