# Wyoming debates book access as great gatsby marks 100 years



Cheyenne, Wyoming – April marked the 100th anniversary of the publication of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s renowned novel, "The Great Gatsby," a work widely considered his masterpiece. Despite its enduring presence in educational curricula, including 11th grade classes in Cheyenne public schools, the novel continues to face challenges in Wyoming public school libraries.

"The Great Gatsby," set in the post-World War I era, centres on themes of wealth disparity and social stratification. It tells the story of a poor soldier who transforms himself into a wealthy but controversial figure in an attempt to win back Daisy, a woman from a rich background. The narrative explores the stark inequalities between the rich and the poor, with Gatsby's wealth stemming from illegal activities such as bootlegging during the Prohibition era. The novel remains a poignant reflection on American society in the 1920s, a period marked by both opulence and deep social divides.

Recent discussions in various media outlets have drawn parallels between Fitzgerald’s depiction of the 1920s and contemporary issues in Washington D.C., particularly the influence of billionaires and concerns about the federal government’s policies. However, the novel's primary focus is on individual experiences and societal divisions rather than political climates.

In addition to "The Great Gatsby," Kurt Vonnegut’s "Slaughterhouse-Five" has also come under scrutiny as a target for removal from school libraries. The book recounts the bombing of Dresden during World War II, an event that Vonnegut experienced firsthand as a prisoner of war. The raid, which resulted in widespread devastation, was described by Governor Stan Hathaway, a former teenage bomber crew member, as a horrific military operation with legitimate targets but catastrophic consequences.

Amid these debates, the Wyoming Legislature is preparing for an interim session, during which the Joint Judiciary Committee will prioritise a study of the state's obscenity laws. This review aims to assess whether legislation is needed to regulate access to certain materials in school libraries. Until now, disputes over book accessibility have primarily been localised to school board disagreements and legal challenges. The potential for statewide regulation raises questions about uniform policies across all districts.

Art Washut, Republican Representative from Casper and chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, spoke to Wyofile last week about the issue. He acknowledged the openness of the discussion and noted "there was strong support to rein in the idea that open access of all materials to kids is appropriate."

The debate reflects broader questions about what materials are deemed suitable for school-aged readers, balancing educational value with community standards. Advocates for maintaining access highlight the importance of exposing high school students to works like "The Great Gatsby" and other significant literature that contribute to intellectual growth.

Joan Barron, writing for Cowboy State Daily, stresses the value of allowing students to engage with such works and references the opt-out system employed in Cheyenne’s public schools, where parents who object to assigned reading can request alternative texts through a straightforward process involving communication between teachers and families.

The upcoming legislative deliberations may have lasting implications on educational materials and access in Wyoming’s public schools, as the state contemplates its role in guiding school library content.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://blogs.loc.gov/bookmarked/2025/04/08/the-great-gatsby-turns-100/> - Corroborates the 100th anniversary of The Great Gatsby (published April 10, 1925) and its cultural significance, aligning with the article's centennial focus.
2. <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2025/04/09/great-gatsby-celebrates-its-100th-anniversary> - Supports the anniversary timing and provides context about adaptations (graphic novels, Broadway productions) reflecting the novel's enduring relevance.
3. <https://www.nowherebookshop.com/book/9781949846782> - Verifies the novel's original 1925 publication by Charles Scribner's Sons and narrative structure through Nick Carraway's perspective.
4. <https://fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org/gatsby-centennial-readings/> - Confirms organized centennial celebrations (e.g., chapter-by-chapter readings by prominent authors) tied to the April 10, 2025 anniversary.
5. <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/arts-and-culture/a63623347/the-great-gatsby-100-year-anniversary-broadway-party/> - Demonstrates contemporary engagement with Gatsby through Broadway adaptations, reinforcing its ongoing cultural impact.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - Identified as the article's source, though specific content about Wyoming's debates is not directly verifiable via provided URLs. Included as referenced origin.
7. <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2025/04/26/joan-barron-tread-lightly-wyoming-lawmakers-looking-to-broaden-the-obscenity-laws/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data