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The Honorable John W. Ford
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm.
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Dear Chairman Ford,

On behalf of our members and the students of Oklahoma, the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) would like to express its opposition to the *Scientific Education and Academic Freedom Act (HB 1551)* currently under consideration. We feel that the wording of this legislation clearly allows non-scientific explanations for topics such as evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning to be introduced into the science classroom.

The language of the bill specifically states that *“teaching of some scientific subjects, such as biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning, can cause controversy”* and *“teachers shall be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught.”*

However, the position of NABT and our members is that “biological evolution must be presented in the same way that it is understood within the scientific community: as a well-accepted principle that provides the foundation to understanding the natural world.” A concept like biological evolution should not be misrepresented as controversial or needing of critical evaluation. Instead it should be presented as the unifying theme of biology, supported by experimentation, logical analysis, and evidence-based revision, based on detectable and measurable data.

As an organization dedicated to biology education, NABT is confident that the students of Oklahoma are best served when curriculum reflects current understanding of evolution appropriately and maintains scientific integrity in the science classroom.

In addition to affirming the position of NABT as its President, I also have the honor of representing the state of Oklahoma as Professor of Zoology at Oklahoma State University. As an educator in Oklahoma, I feel I must add that legislation such as HB 1551 serves to undermine rather than promote the efforts of scientists and educators to provide the best education for our students, and will tarnish the reputations of Oklahoma’s scientists and educators who are, or seek to be involved, in discussions of STEM education at the national level. The result will be negative impacts on how Oklahoma is viewed and is represented, and impair the educational and economic development of the state.

We respectfully request that the state reject HB 1551 in support of science education that imparts to students an understanding of science based on the key components of the scientific method and content agreed upon by scientists and professional educators.

Thank you for your consideration,

Donald P. French
President-NABT
Professor of Biology
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