

Lobbying to defend and improve science education

Josh Rosenau
National Center for
Science Education

Dena Sher
American Civil
Liberties Union

Vic Hutchison
Oklahomans for Excellence
in Science Education

Lobbying to defend and
improve science education
or... Help, there's science
denial in my legislature!

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NATIONAL CENTER for Science Education

DEFENDING THE TEACHING OF EVOLUTION & CLIMATE SCIENCE

NCSE provides information and advice as the premier institution dedicated to keeping evolution and climate change in the science classroom and to keeping creationism and climate change denial out.

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Chronology of "Academic Freedom" Bills

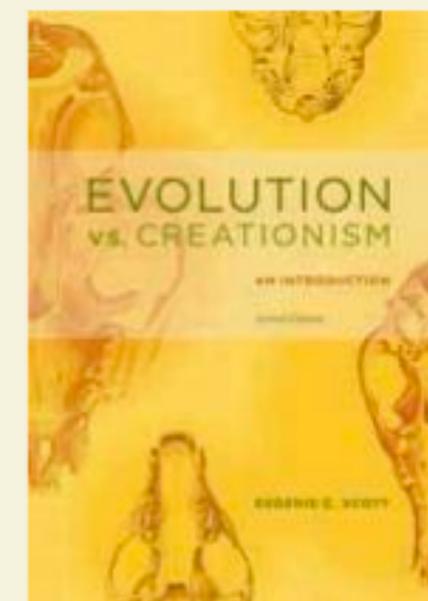
February 7th, 2013

Date of Introduction	State	Bill Number	Current Status
February 12, 2004	Alabama	HB391	Dead
February 17, 2004	Alabama	SB336	Dead
February 8, 2005	Alabama	HB352	Dead
February 8, 2005	Alabama	SB240	Dead
April 5, 2005	Alabama	HB716	Dead
January 9, 2006	Oklahoma	HB 2107	Dead
January 10, 2006	Alabama	HB106	Dead
January 10, 2006	Alabama	SB45	Dead

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by Eugenie C. Scott

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Why
Intelligent Design
is Wrong for
Our Schools

TN “Academic Freedom” Act

- Claims evolution/climate change singled out
 - supposedly “controversial”
- Encourages “critical analysis” of such topics
- Teachers/students can’t be punished for encouraging critical thinking



Personal connections
matter

Organization
matters



“the only questions he has gotten about the bill are from reporters.”

From: Josh Rosenau <rosenau@ncse.com>

Subject: **Gov. Haslam wants to hear from you**

Date: March 28, 2012 7:36:33 PM PDT

On Monday, the Tennessee House voted to pass HB 368, also known as the monkey bill. When the press asked Governor Haslam what he plans to do with the bill, he told them "the only questions he has gotten about the bill are from reporters."

There are still a lot of questions to be asked. Will you [write to Gov. Haslam and ask them?](#)

Why does this bill change the rules for science classes, and only science classes? Why are scientifically uncontroversial topics like evolution and climate change singled out? What are the problems this bill is supposed to solve? And most importantly, what would the bill really do to science education in Tennessee?

A section of the bill could be interpreted to "prohibit" everyone from the state board of education down to locally-elected school boards and principals from establishing a consistent science curriculum or setting 21st-century standards for science education. While the bill's sponsors say this is not the result they desire, the bill's own words create that possibility. If Governor Haslam signs the bill or allows the bill to become law, it will open a can of worms, one that teachers, school districts, and lawyers will be sorting out for decades to come. Tennessee's students – the state's future – will pay the price.

There is still time to for Governor Haslam to answer these questions.

If he vetoes the bill, he'll also be able to ask some questions of his own. Tennessee's science teachers oppose this bill, Tennessee's leading scientists oppose this bill, and so do the parents and students of Tennessee. He wants to hear your questions, and [you can ask them by sending him an email.](#)

Josh Rosenau, Programs and Policy Director, [National Center for Science Education, Inc.](#)

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There are still too many unanswered questions about this bill.

Why does it single out science class? Why does it specifically focus on topics like evolution which are not scientifically controversial, but are subject to religious and political attacks?

How will this affect Tennessee's ability to attract and create 21st century jobs in biotechnology, clean energy, and medical research? How much power will this take away from our locally-elected school boards and our principals?

The bill's sponsors may not intend to step between teachers and principals, but the bill's confusing language may allow just that, and the Governor should oppose this bill until these and many other important questions are resolved. This bill doesn't fix any problems our teachers are facing, and could open our schools to costly and complicated legal battles. I hope you will veto this bill.

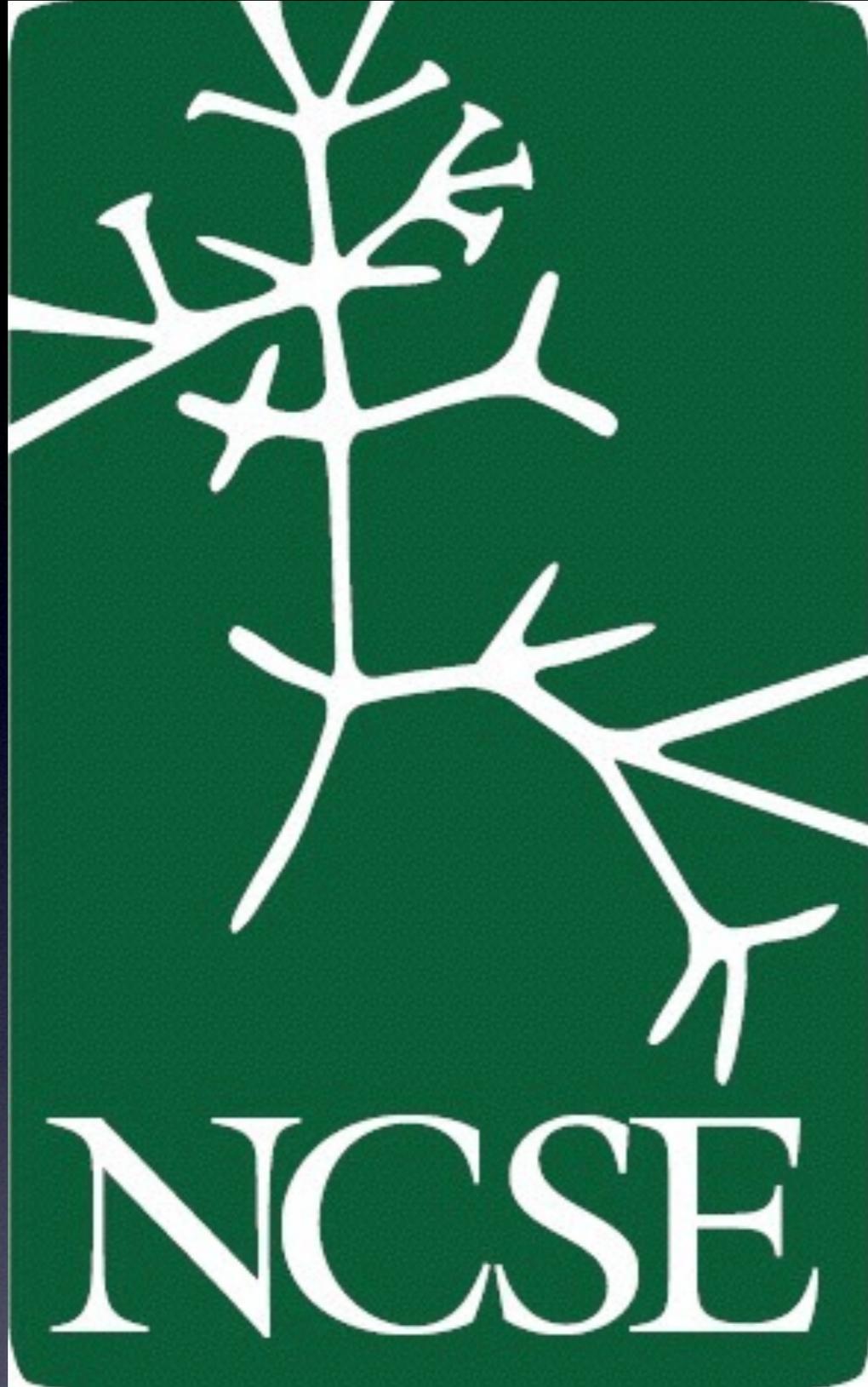
“[G]ood legislation should bring clarity and not confusion. My concern is that this bill has not met this objective. For that reason, I will not sign the bill but will allow it to become law without my signature.”

Start quietly, nicely

Start quietly, nicely

You can always escalate, but it's hard to ramp down

Thank you!



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