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Dear Senator Stanislawski,

On behalf of our members and the students of Oklahoma, the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) would like to express its strong opposition to the *Oklahoma Science Education Act (SB 393)* currently under consideration. The wording of this legislation easily allows non-scientific and false explanations for scientific topics to be inappropriately introduced into the science classroom.

I affirm this position not only as the 2016 President of NABT, but also as an Oklahoma public school educator and parent. As an Oklahoma resident, I have to profess my dismay at the embarrassing and profound impacts that bills such as SB 393 have on our efforts to build a scientifically literate, STEM-ready workforce. These achievements are largely negated by the anti-science message of this bill and the signal it sends to businesses and research institutions across the country about Oklahoma's ability to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The negative effects on how our state is perceived and the disadvantage that perception will have on our students cannot be overstated.

The language of the bill specifically states that *"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 covered in the course being taught"* and that *"Neither the State Board of Education, nor the school district board of education, school district superintendent or school principal shall prohibit any teacher in a public school district from helping students understand, analyze, critique and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing theories covered in the course being taught."*

The author of the bill contends it protects the teaching of scientific information and shall not promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, but that is precisely what is permitted in its text. The Oklahoma Academic Standards for Science (OASS), as well as school district curricula, could be disregarded with impunity, nor should the state diminish the role of – and accountability to – local parents, administrators and school boards.

It is the position of NABT and the professional teachers we represent that scientific content must be presented as the scientific community understands it, and supported by experimentation, logical analysis, evidence-based revision, and based on detectable and measurable data. This unnecessary legislation would contradict the process of science in explaining our natural world by allowing explanations that do not fit the above criteria to be introduced.

NABT is confident that the students of Oklahoma are best served when scientific integrity is maintained in the science classroom. We respectfully request that the state reject SB 393 in support of science education that imparts to students an understanding of science based on the key components of the nature of science and content agreed upon by scientists and professional educators.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bob Melton  
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