

January 26, 2017

Speaker G. Mark Mickelson  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Minority Leader Spencer Hawley  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Chairman Timothy Johns  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Vice Chairman Thomas R. Holmes  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Speaker Mickelson, Minority Leader Hawley, Chairman Johns, and Vice Chairman Holmes,

On behalf of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), I write to respectfully urge your opposition to Senate Bill 55. This measure is bad for science, science education, and the future economic health and well-being of South Dakota.

The AIBS is a scientific, professional society that works to provide decision-makers with vetted information that advances the biological sciences for the benefit of science and society. Our approximately 150 member organizations represent the breadth of the biological sciences and have a combined membership of more than 200,000 scientists and science educators.

It is important to note that there is no scientific controversy about the legitimacy of evolution or global climate change. These scientific concepts have repeatedly been tested and grown stronger with each evaluation. Any controversy around these concepts is political, not scientific. Indeed, evolution is a core principle that helps to explain biology and informs the development of biology-based products and services, including pharmaceuticals, food, and biotechnology.

If Senate Bill 55 is enacted, it is our understanding that it would allow science teachers to miseducate South Dakota's students about any topics they deemed controversial, and would prevent state and local administrators from intervening. Needless controversy, or even litigation, is sure to result.

As the nation endeavors to prepare our children for the jobs of the 21st century, we should be working to strengthen our science education system—not enabling the misrepresentation of science in the classroom.

Please stand up for South Dakota's students by opposing passage of Senate Bill 55.

Sincerely,



Joseph Travis, Ph.D.  
President

Cc: Members of the House Education Committee