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[Home](#) > A suspicious delay in Michigan

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[A suspicious delay in Michigan](#) [3]

At its September 12, 2006, meeting, the Michigan board of education voted to delay adoption of part of the state's science standards until October in order to give the legislature extra time to comment, according to a [report](#) [4] **[Link broken]** from the Associated Press (September 13, 2006). The delay was granted after the board received a request from Representative Brian Palmer (R-District 36), chair of the House Education Committee, and Senator Wayne Kuipers (R-District 30), chair of the Senate Education Committee. The motion passed by a 6-2 vote, despite protests from critics, including the ACLU of Michigan.

It was feared that the ulterior purpose of the delay was to enable antievolution legislators to lobby for the weakening of evolution in the standards. Palmer, for example, sponsored or cosponsored various antievolution bills in the past, including 2003's House Bill 4946, which would have amended the state science standards to refer to "the theory that life is the result of the purposeful, intelligent design of a Creator." During the current legislative session, he supported [HB 5251](#) [5], which targeted both evolution and global warming, and [HB 5606](#) [6], which repeated key language from HB 5251.

The *Detroit Free Press* [reported](#) [7] **[Link broken]** in its editorial (September 14, 2006) that Palmer and Kuiper submitted their request in order to accommodate their colleagues Representatives Jack Hoogendyk (R-District 61) and John Moolenaar (R-District 98), both of whom have a lengthy history of antievolution activity in the legislature. According to the *Free Press*, "As it stands, the policy directs that teachers demonstrate how fossil records, comparative anatomy and other evidence 'may' corroborate the theory of evolution. Hoogendyk and Moolenaar are pushing to have the words read 'may or may not.'"

Reviewing Hoogendyk and Moolenaar's suggested changes, Michigan Citizens for Science [comments](#) [8],

"*The Free Press* only mentions one small aspect of the changes they're pushing for, all of which are designed solely to cast doubt on evolution. Anywhere in the standards where any certainty is expressed at all, even on the most mundane and obvious of concepts, they seek to insert weasel words to cast doubt where none really exists. ... Clearly, their goal is simply to put so many weasel words into the science standards that students will doubt what is in actuality one of the most compelling and well supported theories in all of science."

The *Free Press*'s editorial proceeded to criticize the board for its vote, writing: "This is just another attempt to keep a door open to teaching creationism or intelligent design. The board should have closed it, as science teachers requested. Board members get elected to make decisions, not to defer to political pressure." The delay is particularly unfortunate, the newspaper adds, because the standards were supposed to be in place by October 3, in time to be discussed at a statewide conference of science teachers. The board is now not expected to vote on the standards until October 10, 2006.

[Anti-Evolution](#) [9]

[2006](#) [10]

[Michigan](#) [11]

[+ read](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/12924>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/ncse-staff>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2006/09/suspicious-delay-michigan-00830>

[4] <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060913/NEWS06/609130370/1008>

[5] http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2005/MI/410_antievolution_legislation_in_m_10_4_2005.asp

[6] http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2006/MI/623_a_second_antievolution_bill_in_1_30_2006.asp

[7] <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060914/OPINION01/609140329/1068/OPINION>

[8] <http://michigancitizensforscience.org/main/nfblog/2006/09/15/free-press-editorial-on-boe-decision/>

[9] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

[10] <https://ncse.com/news/2006>

[11] <https://ncse.com/news/michigan>