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The *Boston Globe* (December 7, 2007) [reports](#) [4] that a former researcher at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is suing the research center, claiming that he was fired, in violation of his civil rights, for not accepting evolution. Nathaniel Abraham, who earned a Ph.D. in biology from St. John's University in 2005, was employed as a post-doctoral researcher in the laboratory of Mark Hahn; according to the *Globe*, "He was hired by Hahn's marine biology lab in March 2004 because of his expertise working with zebra fish and in toxicology and developmental biology, according to court documents. He did not tell anyone his creationist views before being hired."

Abraham's views become apparent to Hahn in a casual conversation in October 2004, however, and the next month, Hahn asked him in a letter to resign, citing Abraham's "wish not to work on evolutionary aspects of my grant" and writing, "You have indicated that you do not recognize the concept of biological evolution and you would not agree to include a full discussion of the evolutionary implications and interpretations of our research in any co-authored publications resulting from this work. ... This position is incompatible with the work as proposed to NIH and with my own vision of how it should be carried out and interpreted."

In June 2006, Abraham filed a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which ruled against him in April 2007, stating that there was insufficient probable cause to find that Hahn and Woods Hole engaged in unlawful discriminatory practices. Represented by two lawyers, including David C. Gibbs III of the Christian Law Association (which seeks "to provide free legal assistance to Bible-believing churches and Christians who are experiencing legal difficulty in practicing their religious faith"), Abraham then filed suit in federal district court on November 30, 2007, alleging that his rights were violated under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and seeking compensatory and punitive damages.

In his complaint, Abraham claims that acceptance of evolution "was in no way a bona fide occupational qualification of employment, was not previously mentioned or implied as a requisite of hiring, and was never listed among necessary criteria for the advertised position." In his November 2004 letter to Abraham, however, Hahn wrote, "The research proposed ... has as its foundation the orthologous and paralogous (i.e. evolutionary) relationships among aryl hydrocarbon receptor signaling proteins in the various species proposed as models. The importance of these relationships is clearly evident in our previous papers, which were cited in the advertisement for the position, and in the grant proposal itself."

NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott told the *Globe*, "It is inconceivable that someone working in developmental biology at a major research institution would not be expected to deal intimately with evolution. ... A flight school hiring instructors wouldn't ask whether they accepted that the earth was spherical; they would assume it. Similarly, Woods Hole would have assumed that someone hired to work in developmental biology would accept that evolution occurred. It's part and parcel of the science these days." And the philosopher Michael Ruse was quoted as asking, "what is a person doing in an evolutionary lab when they don't believe in evolution ... and didn't tell anybody they didn't believe in evolution?"

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