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[Senate Resolution 17](#) [4] (PDF), introduced in the Tennessee state senate on February 21, 2007, by Raymond Finney (R-District 8), would, if enacted, "request the commissioner of education to provide answers to questions concerning creationism and public school curriculums in Tennessee," beginning with, "Is the Universe and all that is within it, including human beings, created through purposeful, intelligent design by a Supreme Being, that is a Creator?" If the answer is yes, then SJR 17 poses the further question, "Since the Universe, including human beings, is created by a Supreme Being (a Creator), why is creationism not taught in Tennessee public schools?" If the commissioner declines to answer on the grounds that it is impossible to prove or disprove any answer, then SJR 17 poses the further question, "Since it cannot be determined whether the Universe, including human beings, is created by a Supreme Being (a Creator), why is creationism not taught as an alternative concept, explanation, or theory, along with the theory of evolution in Tennessee public schools?" And if the answer is no, then SJR 17 poses no further questions, remaining content to express admiration of the commissioner "for being able to decide conclusively a question that has long perplexed and occupied the attention of scientists, philosophers, theologians, educators, and others."

After the obligatory discussion of the trial of John Scopes for teaching evolution in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, the on-line news source NashvillePost.com (February 26, 2007) [speculates](#) [5], "This move by Finney, while not likely to receive the same level of interest as the Scopes case, may well have its roots in the same reasoning that encouraged the Rhea County leaders to spark the debate: a desire for attention. The resolution needs only to be passed by the Republican-controlled Senate in order to force Tennessee's Department of Education to answer on the record. A joint resolution would have to pass the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives, where it would likely find itself relegated to a black hole committee and not see the light of day. By circumventing ... the House, Senate Republicans would then be forcing a Bredesen cabinet member to weigh in on the creationism argument, right before next year's

legislative session when both parties would be seeking to add to their numbers in the 2008 elections." (Philip Bredesen, a Democrat, is the current governor of Tennessee.) The fact that the courts have repeatedly ruled -- in, for example, [McLean v. Arkansas](#) [6], [Edwards v. Aguillard](#) [7], and [Kitzmiller v. Dover](#) [8] -- that the teaching of creationism in the public schools violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment is not mentioned.

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