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In a press release dated August 7, 2007, the Texas Freedom Network [accused](#) [4] Don McLeroy, who recently was [appointed](#) [5] as the new chair of the Texas state Board of Education, of harboring "a shocking hostility to both sound science education and religious tolerance." TFN's charge was based on the [transcript](#) [6] of a 2005 talk McLeroy gave at Grace Bible Church in Bryan, Texas, on the debate over teaching evolution and "intelligent design." "This recording makes clear the very real danger that Texas schoolchildren may soon be learning more about the religious beliefs of politicians than about sound science in their biology classes," TFN President Kathy Miller said. "Even worse, it appears that Don McLeroy believes anyone who disagrees with him can't be a true Christian."

A member of the board for the last eight years, McLeroy was recently [described](#) [7] by the *Dallas Morning News* (July 18, 2007) as "aligned with social conservative groups known for their strong stands on evolution, sexual abstinence and other heated topics covered in textbooks" and as "[o]ne of four board members who voted against current high school biology books because of their failure to list weaknesses in the theory of evolution." Discussing that vote in his 2005 talk, McLeroy lamented that the other board members were not swayed by "all the arguments made by all the intelligent design group, all the creationist intelligent design people," adding, "It was only the four really conservative, orthodox Christians on the board [who] were willing to stand up to the textbooks and say they don't present the weaknesses of evolution. Amazing."

Following Phillip Johnson, in his talk McLeroy portrayed "intelligent design" as a "big tent," explaining, "It's because we're all lined up against the fact that naturalism, that nature is all there is. Whether you're a progressive creationist, recent creationist, young earth, old earth, it's all in the tent of intelligent design." He urged his listeners, biblical inerrantists like himself, "to remember, though, that the entire

intelligent design movement as a whole is a bigger tent. ... just don't waste our time arguing with each other about some of the, all of the side issues." Yet he described theistic evolution -- which is opposed to naturalism -- as "a very poor option," continuing, "no one in our group represents theistic evolution, and the big tent of intelligent design does not include theistic evolutionists. Because intelligent design is opposed to evolution. Theistic evolutionists embrace it."

"McLeroy's statements during his lecture are particularly insulting to Roman Catholics and millions of other Christians who see no conflict between their religious faith and accepting the science behind evolution," TFN's Kathy Miller commented. "Texas parents should be very concerned that the governor chose an anti-science, religious ideologue to lead the state body that sets policy for our public schools. ... He might as well have put up a sign that said, 'Only my kind of Christian need apply.'" Texans are currently bracing for a new round of antievolution activity aimed at undermining the treatment of evolution in the state science standards (the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS), to which textbooks submitted for adoption in Texas are required to conform.

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