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12.04.2007

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The forced resignation of the Texas Education Agency's director of science curriculum continues to attract attention and comment. Writing in *The New York Times* (December 3, 2007), Ralph Blumenthal [reported](#) [4], "After 27 years as a science teacher and 9 years as the Texas Education Agency's director of science, Christine Castillo Comer said she did not think she had to remain 'neutral' about teaching the theory of evolution. But now Ms. Comer, 56, of Austin, is out of a job, after forwarding an e-mail message on a talk about evolution and creationism -- 'a subject on which the agency must remain neutral,' according to a dismissal letter last month that accused her of various instances of 'misconduct and insubordination' and of siding against creationism and the doctrine that life is the product of 'intelligent design.'"

The e-mail message that Comer forwarded, which was originally sent by NCSE, announced a talk in Austin by Barbara Forrest, a professor of philosophy at Southeastern Louisiana University and a member of NCSE's board of directors, on the history of the "intelligent design" movement and her expert testimony in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, in which teaching "intelligent design" in the public schools was ruled to be unconstitutional. "I don't see how I took a position by F.Y.I.-ing on a lecture like I F.Y.I. on global warming or stem-cell research," Comer told Blumenthal. "I send around all kinds of stuff, and I'm not accused of endorsing it." The article added, "But she said that as a career science educator, 'I'm for good science,' and that when it came to teaching evolution, 'I don't think it's any stretch of the imagination where I stand.'"

The following day, *The New York Times* (December 4, 2007) expressed concern about Comer's termination on its editorial page, [writing](#) [5], "Is Texas about to become the next state to undermine the teaching of evolution? That is the scary implication of the abrupt ousting of Christine Comer, the state's top expert on science education. ... It was especially disturbing that the agency accused Ms. Comer -- by

forwarding the e-mail message -- of taking a position on 'a subject on which the agency must remain neutral.' Surely the agency should not remain neutral on the central struggle between science and religion in the public schools. It should take a stand in favor of evolution as a central theory in modern biology. Texas's own education standards require the teaching of evolution. ... We can only hope that adherents of a sound science education can save Texas from a retreat into the darker ages."

In Texas, too, newspaper editorials were critical of the TEA. The *Austin American-Statesman* (December 1, 2007), which broke the story about Comer's termination, [commented](#) [6], "from all appearances, Comer was pushed out because the agency is enforcing a political doctrine of strict conservatism that allows no criticism of creationism. ... Forcing Comer out of her job because she passed on an e-mail about the critic's presentation is egregiously wrong." The *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* (December 4, 2007) [concluded](#) [7], "apparently state education officials want educators to perpetuate an academic scam on the state's schoolchildren in service to special interests." And the *Waco Tribune's* columnist John Young sarcastically [commented](#) [8] (December 4, 2007), "Imagine. Someone devoted to real science forwarding an e-mail about someone devoted to the same thing."

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