



Published on NCSE (<https://ncse.com>)

[Home](#) > Creationist bill passed by Louisiana House of Representatives

SHARE TWEET EMAIL [PRINT](#) [1]

[Steve Newton](#) [2]

06.12.2008

[Creationist bill passed by Louisiana House of Representatives](#)

[3]

On June 11, 2008, with less than two weeks left in the legislative calendar, the Louisiana House of Representatives passed [Senate Bill 733](#) [4], a bill which opens the door to creationism in public school science classes. The bill, sponsored in the House by Rep. Frank Hoffman and in the Senate by Sen. Ben Nevers, purports to "promote[] critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning."

The Associated Press (June 12, 2008) [reports](#) [5] **[Link broken]** that "The Senate already has agreed to the bill, but it heads back to that chamber for approval of a provision that would allow the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to prohibit supplemental materials it deems inappropriate. Nevers said he will ask the Senate to approve the amendment. He stressed that the amendment does not require BESE to review all the materials. The state board would only step in if someone raised a question about whether the material was appropriate." Meanwhile, the *Alexandria Town Talk* (June 8, 2008) [observes](#) [6] **[Link broken]** that "State lawmakers are looking at a hectic two weeks as the 2008 legislative session draws to a close with many major issues yet to be settled." Outstanding legislation includes next year's budget, infrastructure construction bills, a voucher proposal for New Orleans public schools, and other controversial legislation.

As *The Baton Rouge Advocate* (June 12, 2008) [explains](#) [7] "Ignoring threats of a lawsuit, the Louisiana House voted for legislation Wednesday that could change the way evolution is taught in public schools. The measure, Senate Bill 733, failed to generate a single question, passed 94-3 and appears poised for final approval. ... "If this new law is used to promote religion in Louisiana public schools, I can guarantee there will be legal action," said Barry Lynn, executive director of [Americans United for Separation of Church and State]. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law that required equal time

on creationism when evolution is taught in public schools." In a press release on June 11, 2008, Lynn [added](#) [8]: "Louisiana students deserve better, and Louisiana taxpayers should not have their money squandered on this losing effort."

In an interview with *The Christian Post* (June 12, 2008), John West, a vice president at the Discovery Institute, [responded](#) [9] that "The proposed Louisiana law expressly states in Section 1C that it 'shall not be construed to promote any religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.'" In an interview with the *Washington Times* (June 12, 2008), Jason Stern, vice president of the Louisiana Family Forum, [insisted](#) [10] "It's not about a certain viewpoint. It's allowing [teachers] to teach the controversy."

Louisiana Coalition for Science, a grassroots group recently founded to advocate for accurate science education, [decried](#) [11] the vote in their own press release (June 11, 2008). Barbara Forrest, a founding member of the group and a member of the NCSE board of directors, said "The Louisiana legislature tried to force creationism into public schools in 1981, and they lost in the U. S. Supreme Court. The Discovery Institute, a national creationist organization, and the Louisiana Family Forum are using the same old tricks, but with new labels. In *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District* in 2005, I showed that intelligent design was cooked up as a new name for the same old creationist arguments, and the strategy behind this bill is no different. Despite their denials, even the bill's backers know that SB 733 is a creationist bill written in creationist code language." She concluded by thanking Patricia Haynes Smith, Jean-Paul Morrell, and Karen Carter Peterson, the three representatives who opposed the bill, and saying "Now that the House has passed the bill, the Senate has one more chance to do the right thing. The entire country is watching. They should reject this bill and let teachers do their jobs. This bill is being pushed by creationist groups and does nothing to help Louisiana, our teachers, or our children. It's heartbreaking to see so few people willing to stand up for Louisiana."

In the Louisiana Citizens for Science release, Patsye Peebles drew on her years of experience as a biology teacher to oppose the bill. "I was a biology teacher for 22 years, and I never needed the legislature to tell me how to present anything. This bill doesn't solve any of the problems classroom teachers face, and it will make it harder for us to keep the focus on accurate science in science classrooms. Evolution isn't scientifically controversial, and we don't need the legislature substituting its judgment for the scientists and science teachers who actually know the subject."

If the bill passes the Senate, it is uncertain how Governor Jindal will respond. *The Washington Times* reports "A spokeswoman for Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal would not say whether he will sign the bill, saying only that he will review it when it gets to his desk."

[Anti-Evolution](#) [12]

[2008](#) [13]

[Louisiana](#) [14]

[+ read](#) [3]

Source URL:

<https://ncse.com/news/2008/06/creationist-bill-passed-by-louisiana-house-representatives-001430#comment-0>

Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13193>

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

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2008/06/creationist-bill-passed-by-louisiana-house-representatives-001430>

- [4] <http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=482728>
- [5] <http://www.nola.com/newsflash/index.ssf?/base/news-39/1213222164265360.xml&storylist=louisiana>
- [6] <http://www.thetowntalk.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080608/NEWS01/806080303/1002>
- [7] <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/politics/19813589.html?showAll=y&c=y>
- [8] http://www.au.org/site/News2?}ServSessionIdr009=1ecizlso04.app7b&abbr=pr&page=NewsArticle&id=9881&security=1002&news_iv_ctrl=1241
- [9] http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080612/32789_Academic_Freedom_Bill_Sweeps_through_La._House.htm
- [10] <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jun/12/new-front-opens-on-evolution-wars/>
- [11] http://lasciencecoalition.org/2008/06/12/reject_sb_733/
- [12] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>
- [13] <https://ncse.com/news/2008>
- [14] <https://ncse.com/news/louisiana>