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## [Scientists oppose ICR certification in Texas](#) [3]

Now that the Institute for Creation Research's application for Texas certification of its graduate school is on hold until April 2008, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is being inundated by e-mails from "some of the state's leading physicians and scientists" critical of the ICR's proposal to offer degrees in science education, the *Austin American-Statesman* (January 24, 2008) [reports](#) [4] **[Link broken]**, "including a Nobel laureate who warned that Texas is at risk of becoming 'the laughingstock of the nation.'" Using the Texas Public Information Act, both the *American-Statesman* and the *Dallas Morning News* received almost three hundred pages of e-mails to the THECB, supporting and opposing the ICR's application. "Many of the notes are from Texas," the *Morning News* (January 23, 2008) [observed](#) [5]. "But others come from all corners of the U.S. and the world -- from Florida to the Philippines, Nevada to Nigeria."

Among the critics were three Nobel laureates. Alfred G. Gilman -- a winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1994; executive vice president, provost, and dean at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School; and a Supporter of NCSE -- asked, "How can Texas simultaneously launch a war on cancer and approve educational platforms that submit that the universe is 10,000 years old?" Robert F. Curl Jr. of Rice University, who won a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1996, alluded to the history of antievolution efforts in Kansas, writing, "If this program wins approval ... Texas will replace Kansas as the laughingstock of the nation." And Steven Weinberg of the University of Texas at Austin, who won a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1979, concurred, writing, "it would be a blow to science education in Texas, and an embarrassment for Texas."

Also weighing in was Daniel W. Foster of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and the president of the Academy of Medicine, Engineering, and Science of Texas, which seeks "to provide broader recognition of the state's top achievers in medicine, engineering and science, and to build a

stronger identity for Texas as an important destination and center of achievement in these fields"; its members include over 200 Texas members of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Academy of Engineering. "We should only teach true science in Texas schools and universities, not pseudoscience," Foster wrote to the THECB. "It is crucially important for our students and for the state. [I]t will be a very negative thing if our state becomes labeled as anti-science."

Back in December 2007, the American Institute for Biological Sciences also took a stand. Its president, Douglas Futuyma of SUNY Stony Brook, [wrote](#) [6] in a December 28, 2007, letter to the THECB, "ICR is committed to advancing Young Earth Creationism, a literal view of the Bible that contends the Earth is less than 10,000 years old. Young Earth Creationism has repeatedly been shown, legally and scientifically, to be a religious belief system and not a credible scientific explanation for the history of Earth or the diversity of biological systems that have evolved on Earth. ... It is unacceptable for the state to sanction the training of science educators committed to the practice of advancing their religious beliefs in a science classroom. ... The THECB will ill-serve science students if it certifies a science teacher education program based on a religious world-view rather than modern science."

The THECB is currently expected to consider the ICR's application for certification for its graduate school at its April 24, 2008, meeting. Members of the THECB are appointed by the governor; a spokesperson for Governor Rick Perry told the *American-Statesman* that he took no position on the ICR's application. In the meantime, as NCSE previously [reported](#) [7], the THECB's commissioner, Raymund A. Paredes, is seeking further information about the ICR's curriculum, both from the ICR itself and from a panel of scientists and science educators. According to the *American-Statesman*, "Paredes'[s] recommendation on the proposal for an online master's degree program is expected to carry considerable weight, but the final decision is up to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board."

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