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[Home](#) > Antievolution bills dead in Michigan

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[Antievolution bills dead in Michigan](#) [3]



When the Michigan legislature ended its last voting session for 2007-2008 on December 19, 2008, two antievolution bills — [House Bill 6027 and Senate Bill 1361](#) [4] — died in committee. The identical bills were instances of the "academic freedom" strategy for undermining the teaching of evolution; as NCSE's Glenn Branch and Eugenie C. Scott recently [wrote](#) [5] in their article "The Latest Face of Creationism," published in the January 2009 issue of *Scientific American*, "'Academic freedom' was the creationist catchphrase of choice in 2008: the Louisiana Science Education Act was in fact born as the Louisiana Academic Freedom Act, and bills invoking the idea were introduced in Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Missouri and South Carolina, although, as of November, all were dead or stalled. ... The appeal of academic freedom as a slogan for the creationist fallback strategy is obvious: everybody approves of freedom, and plenty of people have a sense that academic freedom is desirable, even if they do not necessarily have a good understanding of what it is."

The Michigan bills contended that "the teaching of some scientific subjects, such as biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, human impact of climate change, and human cloning, can cause controversy and that some teachers may be unsure of the expectations concerning how they should present information on such subjects." If enacted, the bills would have required state and local administrators "to create an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that encourages pupils to explore scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills, and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues" and "to assist teachers to find more effective ways to present the science curriculum in instances where that

curriculum addresses scientific controversies" by allowing them "to help pupils understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught."

In a press release dated May 20, 2008, Michigan Citizens for Science blasted HB 6027, [writing](#) [6] that "it does a disservice to teachers, school administrators and local school boards by urging them to incorporate material into science classes that is at odds with well-established science ... HB 6027 ushers schools down a path that will inevitably lead to expensive and divisive court battles." Similarly, in July 2008, the Michigan Science Teachers Association decried both bills, [arguing](#) [7] (document) that the stated goals of the bills are already addressed by the state's educational system. The MSTA added, "Whereas evolution, climate change and cloning are the only 'controversial topics' cited in these bills while 'controversial topics' in non-scientific fields are noticeably omitted and whereas the Curriculum Expectations already address the pedagogical & educational goals of these bills, the legislative intent of these bills is called into question. This type of legislation may enable the introduction of non-scientific ideologies, such as 'intelligent design (ID) creationism', into the public science classroom."

[General](#) [8]

[2008](#) [9]

[Michigan](#) [10]

[+ read](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13323>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/glenn>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2008/12/antievolution-bills-dead-michigan-003397>

[4] <https://ncse.com/node/4654>

[5] <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-latest-face-of-creationism>

[6] <http://michigancitizensforscience.org/main/nfblog/2008/05/20/mcfs-press-release-on-hb-6027>

[7] http://www.msta-mich.org/downloads/about/Academic_Freedom_Law.doc

[8] <https://ncse.com/general>

[9] <https://ncse.com/news/2008>

[10] <https://ncse.com/news/michigan>