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Kenneth R. Miller

In a three-part guest essay posted at Carl Zimmer's blog [The Loom](#) [4], Kenneth R. Miller responded to a recent attack by the Discovery Institute on his testimony in the *Kitzmiller v. Dover* case. At issue in the [first part](#) [5] is the claim, found in both *Of Pandas and People* [6] and Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* [7], that the blood clotting system in vertebrates is irreducibly complex and therefore unevolvable. After rebutting the claim that he misrepresented Behe's claims in his testimony, Miller proceeds to explain the latest scientific research that undermines Behe's claims: "The lamprey, as luck would have it, has a perfectly functional clotting system, and it lacks not only the three factors missing in jawed fish, but also Factors IX and V."

Miller turns his attention in the [second part](#) [8] of his essay to the Discovery Institute's attempt to rehabilitate the concept of irreducible complexity. Explaining Behe's argument, he comments, "That would be a powerful argument against evolution — if it were true. Unfortunately, it's not, and the Dover trial demonstrated that for at least three of ID's favorite systems, blood-clotting, the bacterial flagellum, and the immune system." The Discovery Institute's attack fails, he contends, even to represent Behe's argument correctly, and "once you've demonstrated that the parts of the system do indeed work just fine in other contexts, you're answered the ID challenge fully and completely. Case closed. Three years ago, in fact. Case closed, and ID lost."

In the [third part](#) [9] of his essay, Miller wonders why the Discovery Institute is bothering to assail the *Kitzmiller* decision three years after the fact. "The only conclusion I can draw," he writes, "is that they must be maneuvering for the next round of state board hearings or legislative sessions — and I'm concerned. These folks are a whole lot better at politics and public relations than they are at science, and that means that everyone who cares about science education should be on guard." Miller was prescient: the first two antievolution bills of the 2009 legislative session — Oklahoma's [Senate Bill 320](#) [10] and Mississippi's [House Bill 25](#) [11] — have already appeared.

Over at the Panda's Thumb blog, Nick Matzke adds a host of details to Miller's rebuttal, [noting](#) [12] that Behe in fact wrote the portion of *Of Pandas and People* that discusses the blood clotting system. Further, in *Kitzmiller* he testified that the treatment of blood clotting in *Darwin's Black Box* is "essentially the same," vitiating the Discovery Institute's attempt to insulate Behe from the failures of *Of Pandas and People's* treatment. In fact, the treatments differ somewhat, which, as Matzke notes, was a problem for Behe on [cross-examination](#) [13]: "Behe could have just said 'I was wrong in *Pandas*, my newer definition is right.' But of course, the whole point of Behe being there was to defend the ID book on trial, which was *Pandas*, so he couldn't do that."

Miller is Professor of Biology and Royce Family Professor for Teaching Excellence at Brown University and the author of [Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul](#) [14] (Viking, 2008); he was the lead expert witness for the plaintiffs in [Kitzmiller v. Dover](#) [15]. A Supporter of NCSE, he received its Friend of Darwin award in 2003. Matzke, who is now a graduate student in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, worked for NCSE from 2004 to 2007. He was the lead NCSE staffer working on the *Kitzmiller v. Dover* case, providing a wealth of scientific expertise and practical advice to the legal team representing the ultimately victorious plaintiffs.

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