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The executive committee of the Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology decided not to hold any future meetings in New Orleans owing to "the official position of the state in weakening science education and specifically attacking evolution in science curricula," according to a February 5, 2009, [letter](#) [4] (PDF) from SICB's president, Richard Satterlie, to Louisiana's governor Bobby Jindal. Noting that the last SICB meeting, held in Boston, attracted over 1850 scientists and graduate students to the city for five days, Satterlie observed, "As you might imagine, a professional meeting with nearly 2000 participants can contribute to the economic engine of any community." But in 2011, those economic benefits will accrue to Salt Lake City rather than to New Orleans.

Particularly of concern to SICB was the Louisiana Science Education Act — originally introduced as Senate Bill 561, then renamed as Senate Bill 733, and finally enacted as Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:285.1. As NCSE previously [reported](#) [5], the law threatens to open the door for creationism and scientifically unwarranted critiques of evolution to be taught in public school science classes. The development of a [policy](#) [6] about what types of supplementary classroom materials will, and will not, be allowable under the law was not reassuring, especially when a provision that "[m]aterials that teach creationism or intelligent design or that advance the religious belief that a supernatural being created humankind shall be prohibited for use in science classes" was deleted.

Taking note of SICB's decision, the [Louisiana Coalition for Science](#) [7] wrote in a February 13, 2009, [press](#)

[release](#) [8] (PDF), "The first tangible results of the Louisiana legislature's passage and Gov. Bobby Jindal's signing of the 2008 Louisiana Science Education Act have materialized, and these results are negative both for the state's economy and national reputation." Observing that Governor Jindal signed the bill over the protests of educators and scientists in Louisiana and nationally, the press release concluded, "The citizens of Louisiana, whose educational well-being the governor claims to be so concerned about, are now paying the price — literally — for his loyalty to his conservative Christian base."

The Louisiana Coalition for Science also noted that SICB may not be the only scientific organization considering taking its business elsewhere. In the August 2008 issue of *ASBMB Today*, Gregory Petsko, the president of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, called for a boycott by scientific organizations of Louisiana and of any state adopting antievolution legislation, [writing](#) [9], "As scientists, we need to join such protests with our feet and wallets. ... I think we need to see to it that no future meeting of our society [the ASBMB was already committed to holding its 2009 meeting in New Orleans before the LSEA was enacted] will take place in Louisiana as long as that law stands."

SICB's decision to shun Louisiana was in the headlines, both in Louisiana and nationally. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* (February 16, 2009) [led](#) [10] its story with, "A national organization of scientists has informed Gov. Bobby Jindal it will not hold its annual convention in Louisiana as long as the recently adopted Science Education Act remains on the books," and quoted a spokesperson for Governor Jindal as saying, "That's too bad. ... New Orleans is a first-class city for a convention." In its report, *The New York Times* (February 17, 2009) [quoted](#) [11] Barbara Forrest — a member of NCSE's board of directors as well as a leader of the Louisiana Coalition for Science — on the evasive language of the LSEA: "They're using code language, which is not new ... Creationists have done it for decades."

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