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[Senate Bill 2396](#) [4] (PDF), filed on February 27, 2009, would, if enacted, amend a section of Florida law to require "[a] thorough presentation and critical analysis of the scientific theory of evolution." The bill is sponsored by Stephen R. Wise (R-District 5), who was in the news earlier in February when he announced his intention to introduce a bill requiring "intelligent design" to be taught in Florida's public schools. "If you're going to teach evolution, then you have to teach the other side so you can have critical thinking," he [told](#) [5] the Jacksonville *Times-Union* (February 8, 2009). Wise acknowledged that his bill was likely to invite a legal challenge, but contended, "Someplace along the line you've got to be able to make a value judgment of what it is you think is the appropriate thing." Evidently he changed his mind about how to accomplish his goal, since "intelligent design" is not mentioned in the bill.

But the phrase "[a] thorough presentation and critical analysis of the scientific theory of evolution" is familiar from the previous legislative session in Florida. House Bill 1483, which originally purported to protect the right of teachers to "objectively present scientific information relevant to the full range of scientific views regarding biological and chemical evolution," was eventually amended — due to concerns about its constitutionality — to require the public schools to provide "[a] thorough presentation and critical analysis of the scientific theory of evolution." Challenged to justify the measure, its sponsor Alan Hays (R-District 25) claimed that it was necessary to protect teachers seeking to "provide a critical analysis" of evolution, although the *St. Petersburg Times* (March 6, 2008) [reported](#) [6] that it was unable to substantiate any claims of persecution.

During the previous legislative session, the House of Representatives preferred the "thorough

presentation and critical analysis of the scientific theory of evolution" language of HB 1483 — voting 71-43 to adopt the language on April 28, 2008 — while the Senate preferred the "full range of scientific views regarding biological and chemical evolution" language of SB 2692. Wise was then dismissive of HB 1483's language, [telling](#) [7] the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* (April 24, 2008) that Hays "must be hitting the sauce if he thinks he's going to send the bill back" to the Senate. In any case, the two chambers were unable to agree on the wording of a bill before the legislative session expired, prompting the *Tampa Tribune* (May 3, 2008) to [comment](#) [8] in its editorial reviewing the accomplishments of the legislature, "The session will be remembered for what *wasn't* done to compromise the quality of education in Florida" (emphasis in original).

The phrase "critical analysis" was used to undermine the teaching of evolution situation in Ohio from 2002 to 2006. As NCSE's Glenn Branch [explains](#) [9] in *Reports of the NCSE*, in 2002 Ohio adopted a set of state science standards that included a controversial indicator calling for students to be able to "describe how scientists continue to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory." At the time, it was feared that the indicator would provide a pretext for the introduction of creationist misrepresentations of evolution; in 2004, those fears proved to be justified, when the state board of education voted to adopt a model lesson plan riddled with scientific inaccuracies and pedagogical infelicities. But after the decision in *Kitzmiller v. Dover* and the revelation that the lesson plan was adopted despite warnings from experts at the Ohio Department of Education, the board voted in 2006 to rescind both the model lesson plan and the indicator.

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