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Over two hundred faculty members at Iowa's colleges and universities have endorsed a [statement](#) [4] calling on Iowa's legislature to reject [House File 183](#) [5], the so-called Evolution Academic Freedom Act. Responding to the bill's contention that "current law does not expressly protect the right of instructors to objectively present scientific information relevant to the full range of scientific views regarding chemical and biological evolution," the statement explains, "It is misleading to claim that there is any controversy or dissent within the vast majority of the scientific community regarding the scientific validity of evolutionary theory. Since there is no real dissent within the scientific community ... 'academic freedom' for alternative theories is simply a mechanism to introduce religious or non-scientific doctrines into our science curriculum."

HF 183 contends that "instructors have experienced or feared discipline, discrimination, or other adverse consequences as a result of presenting the full range of scientific views regarding chemical and biological evolution," and its sponsor, Rod A. Roberts (R-District 51), [told](#) [6] the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* (February 27, 2009) that his bill is "about the freedom that an instructor and students can engage in without fear of criticism, censure or fear of losing one's job." But such claims of persecution have not been substantiated, the authors of the statement — Hector Avalos of Iowa State University and James W. Demastes and Tara C. Smith of the University of Iowa — [explained](#) [7] to the *Ames Tribune* (February 25, 2009).

NCSE's Glenn Branch [told](#) [8] the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 25, 2009) that the new Iowa statement is apparently the first organized response to such a bill by college faculty members throughout

a state. Between the opposition from college and university instructors and the opposition of the Iowa State Education Association — the state affiliate of the National Education Association, representing over 34,000 education employees in Iowa — the bill's prospects are dim. Although the University of Iowa is not taking a position on the bill, its legislative liaison was quoted by the *Press-Citizen* as saying, "From what I've heard, I don't anticipate it making it past the first funnel. We have concerns about the bill, but we are not expecting it to move."

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