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New Mexico's [Senate Bill 433](#) [4] died in committee when the legislature adjourned sine die on March 21, 2009. The bill, if enacted, would have required schools to allow teachers to inform students "about relevant scientific information regarding either the scientific strengths or scientific weaknesses pertaining to biological evolution or chemical evolution," protecting teachers who choose to do so from "reassignment, termination, discipline or other discrimination." SB 433 joins Iowa's House File 183 and Oklahoma's Senate Bill 320 as proposed "academic freedom" antievolution bills that failed in 2009; Alabama's House Bill 300 and Missouri's House Bill 656 are still active.

The bill mentioned only "biological evolution or chemical evolution," but its sponsor, Kent Cravens (R-District 27), described it as having wider applicability, [telling](#) [5] the *Santa Fe New Mexican* (March 3, 2009), that it "just asks that if there's a controversial scientific theory being presented, that a teacher can't be reprimanded or fired or downgraded or any way harmed if the teacher happens to mention that there are other theories of controversial scientific nature, to include biological evolution, human cloning, global warming, you name a dozen different things." In a post at The Panda's Thumb blog (March 21, 2009), Dave Thomas [suggested](#) [6] that Cravens may have intended to revise his bill accordingly.

Analyses of the bill performed by various state agencies were not enthusiastic. According to the Legislative Education Study Committee's summary [analysis](#) [7] (PDF), the Public Education Department was worried that the bill would allow the teaching of creationism, thereby inviting litigation; the Higher Education Department observed that the New Mexico state science standards already require students to understand the evidential basis for evolution; and the Office of Education Accountability questioned the

bill's premises "that the theory of evolution lacks scientific validity ... and that teachers and students need protection when addressing 'relevant scientific strengths or scientific weakness pertaining to biological evolution or chemical evolution.'"

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