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[Senate Bill 873](#) [4], introduced in the South Carolina Senate on May 21, 2009, and referred to the Senate Committee on Education, would, if enacted, require the state board of education to "examine all curriculum in use in this State that purports to teach students about the origins of mankind to determine whether the curriculum maintains neutrality toward religion." The bill further provides, "Related to non-religion, the examination must include a review as to whether the curriculum contains a sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus preferring those who believe in no religion over those who hold religious beliefs." The first year of the current two-year legislative session ended on May 21, 2009, so S. 873 is not likely to be considered until the second year begins in 2010.

A second antievolution bill, [Senate Bill 875](#) [5], was also introduced in the South Carolina Senate on May 21, 2009, and referred to the Senate Committee on Education. A version of the "academic freedom" antievolution bill, S. 875 provides, "Teachers must be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course. ... School governing authorities including, but not limited to, school and district superintendents, principals, and administrators, may not prohibit a teacher in a public school in this State from helping students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course."

Both bills were introduced by Senator Michael Fair (R-District 6), who spearheaded a number of previous antievolution efforts in [South Carolina](#) [6]. In 2003, he sought to establish a committee to "determine whether alternatives to evolution as the origin of species should be offered in schools." The *Greenville*

News (May 1, 2003), reported that Fair "said his intention is to show that Intelligent Design is a viable scientific alternative that should be taught in the public schools." In 2005, he introduced a bill modeled on the so-called Santorum language often misrepresented as contained in the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The bill failed, but Fair won himself a description as "the dominant voice advocating for S.C. schools to teach more than Charles Darwin's theories of evolution," according to *The State* (June 17, 2005). In 2008, he introduced a version of the "academic freedom" antievolution bill, which died in committee.

Updated December 14, 2009, to include information about S. 875.

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[4] http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess118_2009-2010/bills/873.htm

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