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[Home](#) > Creationist board chair out in Texas

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[Creationist board chair out in Texas](#) [3]



The Texas Senate voted not to confirm Don McLeroy in his post as chair of the Texas state board of education on May 28, 2009. Although the vote to confirm him was 19-11, a two-thirds approval was required. The *San Antonio Express-News* (May 28, 2009) [explained](#) [4], "The Senate seldom rejects gubernatorial appointments. The Senate's blocking of McLeroy will force Gov. Rick Perry to appoint a new board leader. McLeroy will keep his spot as a board member."

Earlier, the *Houston Chronicle* (May 25, 2009) [reported](#) [5] that, "there is speculation in the Capitol and within the Texas Education Agency that Gov. Rick Perry might elevate Cynthia Dunbar, R-Richmond, to lead the board" if McLeroy was not confirmed. The newspaper added, "Like McLeroy, Dunbar also holds strong Christian beliefs and recently authored a book that advocates more religion in the public square."

McLeroy's confirmation was editorially opposed by a number of Texas newspapers, including the *San Antonio Express-News* (May 3, 2009), which [wrote](#) [6], "McLeroy has demonstrated he is unfit to lead a body that crafts public education policy for this great state," and the *Austin American-Statesman* (May 8, 2009), which [described](#) [7] his tenure as chair as "disastrous," while cautioning, "Simply removing McLeroy, a dentist, from the chairmanship won't be enough to bring sanity" to the board.

A major concern of the senators voting against McLeroy's confirmation was his attempts to undermine the treatment of evolution in the state science standards. Eliot Shapleigh (D-District 29), for example, questioned his [endorsement](#) [8] of a book that describes parents who want their kids to learn about evolution as "monsters," scientists as "atheists," and clergy who see no conflict between science and

faith as "morons." McLeroy is, notoriously, a creationist himself, as the *Austin American-Statesman* (March 8, 2009) [described](#) [9] in detail.

In a statement dated May 28, 2009, Kathy Miller of the Texas Freedom Network [commented](#) [10], "We had hoped that the Legislature would take more action to put this train back on the tracks, but clearly new leadership on the board was a needed first step. The governor should know that parents will be watching closely to see whether he chooses a new chairman who puts the education of their children ahead of personal and political agendas."

[Anti-Evolution](#) [11]

[2009](#) [12]

[Texas](#) [13]

[+ read](#) [3]

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[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13402>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/glenn>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2009/05/creationist-board-chair-out-texas-004817>

[4] <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/46402537.html>

[5] <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/6440787.html>

[6] http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/editorials/McLeroy_wrong_choice_for_SBOE.html

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[9] <http://www.statesman.com/news/content/region/legislature/stories/03/08/0308mcleroy.html>

[10] <http://tfnblog.wordpress.com/2009/05/28/tfn-statement-on-senates-mcleroy-vote/>

[11] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

[12] <https://ncse.com/news/2009>

[13] <https://ncse.com/news/texas>