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The antiscience provision was removed from Ohio's [House Bill 597](#) [4] by the House Rules and Reference Committee on September 4, 2014 — only to be replaced by a provision requiring students to "review, in an objective manner, the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories in the standards." The same language is familiar from antiscience bills across the country, including Tennessee's "monkey law."

Also added to HB 597 was a similarly familiar provision — "Nothing in ... this section shall be construed to promote any religious or nonreligious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion" — which is apparently intended to immunize the bill from the charge that it would violate the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

"If the sponsors of the bill are trying to reassure the public that they're not trying to open the classroom door to creationism, climate change denial, and pseudoscience of all kinds," commented NCSE's deputy director Glenn Branch, "they're not doing a good job." He added, "As a product of Ohio's public schools myself, I earnestly hope that the state legislature will not accept such a bill that would compromise the integrity of science education."

As NCSE previously [reported](#) [5], HB 597, aimed primarily at eliminating Common Core, also contained a provision requiring the state's science standards to "prohibit political or religious interpretation of

scientific facts in favor of another." A sponsor of the bill, Andy Thompson (R-District 95), explained that local school districts would be allowed to teach creationism along with evolution and global warming denial alongside climate science.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (August 22, 2014) [warned](#) [6], "Count on a serious court battle if a few state legislators have their way and Intelligent Design and other religious interpretations of science are allowed to be taught in public schools," and NCSE's Glenn Branch [told](#) [7] the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (August 22, 2014), "It's a hugely bad idea. ... Some [local school districts] will be tempted to push the limits and teach creationism. If they do, they'll get sued over it."

What are the prospects of HB 597? Matt Huffman (R-District 4), a sponsor of the bill and chair of the Rules and Reference Committee would not predict when the committee would vote on the bill, [according](#) [8] to the *Columbus Dispatch* (September 5, 2014). The Speaker of the House was not willing to predict whether the bill would receive a floor vote in the House, and Gerald Stebelton (R-District 77) predicted that there were not enough votes for it to pass.

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