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"Idaho lawmakers have rejected new K-12 science standards after receiving criticism over how the [standards] — which for the first time include global warming and evolution components — were finalized," [reported](#) [4] the Associated Press (February 9, 2016).

Although the Idaho state board of education approved the new standards in August 2015, the approval was subject to legislative approval. On February 2, 2016, the House Education Committee voted to reject the standards, and on February 8, 2016, the Senate Education Committee unanimously followed suit.

At neither committee meeting was the content of the standards addressed in detail. Rather, the committees objected to the lack of opportunity for public comment on the new standards. The chair of the House Education Committee was quoted as saying, "I feel we can do a better job than what we've done in terms of getting feedback from our citizens."

But as the Associated Press's story hinted, there is reason to think that hostility toward the inclusion of evolution and climate change in the standards played a role in the committees' decisions to reject the new standards, despite their inattention to the contents of the standards during their meetings.

Before the House Education Committee meeting, a draft motion to revise the standards' treatment of global warming, the age of the earth, the origin of the solar system, the Big Bang, and evolution, describing those topics as "questionable science," was in circulation. The motion was not, however,

introduced.

After the House Education Committee meeting, Idaho Education News (February 2, 2016) [reported](#) [5] that Lance Clow (R-District 24a) said, of a standard that referred to human activities as "significantly" altering the biosphere, that it was "troublesome to some people": "Compared to what?" he asked.

After the Senate Education Committee meeting, Tim Corder of the state department of education [told](#) [6] Idaho Education News (February 8, 2016) that references in the standards to the age of the earth, the origin of the universe, and climate change "may have been what motivated a lot of people to take issue with them."

What's next for science education in Idaho? According to Idaho Education News, "The new standards are dead for 2016. ... so that means the old standards stay on the books until at least the 2017 legislative session."

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