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[Home](#) > Darwin in danger? Top Evolution Stories of the Year

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[Darwin in danger? Top Evolution Stories of the Year](#) [3]

Evolution is under attack across the U.S. Last year, the teaching of evolution was challenged in scores of schools. During the same period, six states introduced (and Louisiana passed) "academic freedom laws" that discredit evolution and smuggle creationist teachings into the classroom. (For more, go [here](#) [4]).

2009 doesn't look much better. Oklahoma is first to bat with a strong antievolution bill, followed by Mississippi with a bill requiring warning labels on textbooks. Other states that may consider similar legislation in 2009 include Michigan, Florida, Missouri, New Mexico, and South Carolina.

Creationists are also undermining the teaching of evolution by sabotaging state science standards, with a battle currently raging among the members of the Texas state board of education. And in too many classrooms around the country, due to local pressure, their own misconceptions, or a lack of training, teachers are not teaching evolution.

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is at the forefront of the battle to defend the teaching of evolution in the public schools.

Here's NCSE's list of the hottest evolution stories of the last 12 months:

1. The Latest Face of Creationism in the Classroom Creationists who want their religious ideas taught as scientific fact in public schools continue to hide their true aims. NCSE's own Dr. Genie Scott and Glenn Branch, in the January *Scientific American*, dissect the motives and methods of those trying to push evolution out of the classroom.

For more, go [here](#). [5]

Expert contacts: Dr. Genie Scott, Glenn Branch

2. They messed with Texas (science standards, that is)

Texas is rewriting its outdated science standards, and the result—thanks to a state board of education dominated by creationists—is one step forward and one step back. Scientists and educators applauded the removal of "strengths and weaknesses" language, but were appalled at the last-minute creationist revisions to the Biology and Earth Sciences standards. The next chapter in this story takes place this coming March.

["Victory over 'weaknesses' in Texas"](#) [6]

["What's next for Texas science standards?"](#) [7]

Expert contacts: Josh Rosenau, Dr. Genie Scott

3. Stealth creationism wins in Louisiana; educators dismayed

Louisiana passed the first antievolution "academic freedom" law; now its board of education is rewriting the state's policies to accommodate it. The results so far aren't pretty.

["A mixed result in Louisiana"](#) [8]

["Louisiana governor signs creationist bill"](#) [9]

Expert contacts: Dr. Barbara Forrest, NCSE Board Member and founder, Louisiana Coalition for Science; Josh Rosenau

4. Mississippi: Sticker shock

Is learning about evolution dangerous to kids' health? One Mississippi legislator thinks so, introducing a bill that would force school districts to slap a warning label on high school biology textbooks.

["Antievolution legislation in Mississippi"](#) [10]

Expert contacts: Steven Newton, Anton Mates

5. Not all OK in Oklahoma

It's called the "Scientific Education and Academic Freedom Act," but educators and scientists say the title's a smokescreen. The real purpose, they say? To undermine the teaching of evolution by encouraging teachers to mislead their students.

["Antievolution legislation in Oklahoma"](#) [11]

Expert contacts: Steven Newton, Anton Mates

6. Evolution speaks! The third edition of NCSE's popular *Voices for Evolution* was published in August and contains no fewer than 178 statements supporting the teaching of evolution from scientific, educational,

civil liberties, and religious organizations. Said one reader: "It needs to be in the hands of every teacher in the United States."

["A new edition of *Voices for Evolution*"](#) [12]

Expert contacts: Glenn Branch, Dr. Genie Scott

7. Florida: Science standards vs. the law

After a long tussle, Florida's board of education voted to present evolution as a "fundamental concept underlying all of biology." But a new state law may force the board to rewrite science standards again—and this time, creationists may succeed in squeezing evolution out.

["The e-word arrives in Florida"](#) [13]

["Back to the drawing board in Florida?"](#) [14]

Expert contacts: Josh Rosenau, Glenn Branch

8. Teachers teaching evolution—and creationism?

How much time do teachers devote to teaching evolution? How many teachers even accept evolution? The numbers, revealed by researchers writing in *PLoS Biology*, are truly scary.

["Evolution and Creationism in America's Classrooms"](#) [15]

Expert contacts: Dr. Genie Scott, Dr. Louise Mead

9. Forward an email, lose your job?

The crime? Christine Comer, the Director of Science for the Texas Education Agency, was given the heave-ho after forwarding an email to her colleague. The topic? A public lecture being given by Barbara Forrest, an intelligent design critic and NCSE board member.

["Texas Science Director Forced Out"](#) [16]

Expert contacts: Dr. Barbara Forrest, Glenn Branch

10. Ben Stein vs. Darwin (p.s. Darwin wins)

Is "no intelligence allowed" Ben Stein's motto? Maybe not, but NCSE's detailed, incisive dissection of the creationist pseudo-documentary *Expelled* lays bare the motives and misinformation of the creationist movement.

["Expelled Exposed"](#) [17]

["Good news and bad news for Expelled"](#) [18]

Expert contacts: Josh Rosenau, Anton Mates

11. Evo vs. Creo: The last word.

Hot off the presses is *the* second edition of the book on the subject of evolution vs. creationism. In crystal clear prose, Dr. Genie Scott examines the issues from every angle—scientific, religious, educational, legal, and more. An essential guide for teachers, scientists, or any citizen concerned about science education in the U.S.

[Evolution vs. Creationism: An Introduction \[19\], \(2nd Edition\) \[19\]](#)

Expert contacts: Dr. Genie Scott, Glenn Branch

12. Master of Pseudo-science?

The Institute for Creation Research, a young-earth creationist organization, wants to issue master's degrees in science education in Texas. Scientists in Texas, as you might imagine, objected and the state agreed. But the debate rages on.

["ICR seeks to grant degrees in Texas" \[20\]](#)

["Survey shows overwhelming opposition to ICR certification" \[21\]](#)

Expert contacts: Glenn Branch, Dr. Genie Scott

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a non-profit membership organization that promotes and defends the teaching of evolution. It provides scientific, educational, legal, and other information and advice relating to the evolution vs. creationism controversy to schools, educators, parents, and other concerned citizens. NCSE's members are scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious affiliations.

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[Anti-Evolution \[25\]](#)

[2009 \[26\]](#)

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