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Teaching of evolution still in danger; US economy in peril?

Will February 12th be a happy 200th birthday for Charles Darwin? Maybe not, says Glenn Branch, Deputy Director of the National Center for Science Education (NCSE) in an article that just appeared on the [U.S. News & World Report web site](#) [4].

On one hand, the scientific community remains convinced about the validity of evolution—and how understanding evolution is essential to scientific literacy and ultimately, to our competitiveness as a nation.

But Darwin would be shocked to learn that almost half of Americans don't accept evolution—and that thanks to misinformation campaigns backed by creationists and other anti-science groups—teaching evolution is still controversial across the United States.

"The news gets grimmer" says Branch. "Last year, Louisiana enacted a law that encourages teachers and students to debate the 'strengths and weaknesses' of evolution". This, says Branch, is the latest creationist attempt to dumb down the science curriculum by pitting phony arguments against evolution in the classroom and in textbooks. A world-class education, in short, relies on solid scientific reasoning—empirical evidence, logic, and scientific testing to evaluate scientific explanations. Half a dozen other states—including Oklahoma, Florida, and Minnesota—have or are now considering similar laws.

But in this era of global competition and environmental crisis, says Branch, "scientific literacy is not a luxury. Yet the United States is next-to-last among developed countries—ahead only of Turkey—in its public acceptance of evolution."

How are creationists tearing up science standards, pressuring teachers and textbook publishers, and otherwise promoting their political agenda at the expense of kids? And how are scientists, teachers, parents, and organizations like the NCSE fighting back? Check out Glenn Branch's article, "[Intelligent Design is Not Science, and Should Not Join Evolution in the Classroom](#)" [4].

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The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a not-for-profit, membership organization that defends and promotes the teaching of evolution in the public schools. The NCSE provides information and resources to schools, parents, and concerned citizens working to keep evolution in public school science education. We educate the press and public about the scientific, educational, and legal aspects of the creation and evolution controversy, and supply needed information and advice to defend good science education at local, state, and national levels. Our 4000 members are scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious affiliations.

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