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Insanity, someone once observed, is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. And yet creationists, climate change deniers, and their fellow travelers propose the same old bills (with a new coat of paint) year after year attacking evolution and climate change education specifically, and science education generally.

As in years past, a gaggle of anti-science education bills were proposed in 2016 and were quickly shot down—or left to die quietly in committee. As well as the usual crop of “academic freedom” bills, there were also legislative attacks on state science standards—in Idaho, Iowa, and West Virginia—and a couple of oddball bills. But, encouragingly, there were a handful of pro-science education bills.

The legislative lay of the land:

Arizona

Senate Resolution 1001

Aim: Express the Senate's recognition of February 12, 2016, as International Darwin Day.

Status: Passed by the Senate Natural Resources Committee; died when the legislative session adjourned.

Links:

[Arizona's Darwin Day bill progresses](#) [4]

Florida

House Bill 899 and Senate Bill 1018

Aim: Would allow taxpayers to object to the use of specific instructional materials in the public schools.

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Antiscience bills die in Florida](#) [5]

Idaho

Senate Bill 1321

Aim: Would have permitted the use of the Bible in Idaho's public schools "for reference purposes to further the study of" a variety of topics, including "astronomy, biology, [and] geology".

Status: Amended to omit the references to the sciences. Resubmitted as Senate Bill 1342.

Links:

[Bible-as-science-reference bill in Idaho defused?](#) [6]

Senate Bill 1342

Aim: Would have permitted the use of religious texts, including the Bible, "in Idaho public schools for reference to further the study" of various topics.

Status: Passed the legislature; vetoed by the governor.

Links:

[Bible-as-reference bill vetoed in Idaho](#) [7]

Senate Concurrent Resolution 140

Aim: Rejection of the Idaho state science standards adopted in 2015.

Status: Passed.

Links:

[Science standards definitively rejected in Idaho](#) [8]

Iowa

House File 2054

Aim: Would have reversed Iowa's decision to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards.

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Anti-NGSS bill in Iowa dies](#) [9]

Kentucky

Senate Bill 50

Aim: Would have extended the duration of summer vacation in the state's public schools in order to boost tourism—including to a creationist attraction.

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Vacation creationism bill dies in Kentucky](#) [10]

Louisiana

Senate Bill 156

Aim: Would have repealed the state's Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act (which has been on the books since 1981).

Status: Rejected in committee

Links:

[Back to 1981 in Louisiana](#) [11]

Mississippi

House Bill 50

Aim: Would deprive administrators of the ability to prevent teachers from miseducating students about topics that "may cause debate and disputation"; the sponsor acknowledged that he sought to allow teachers in the public schools to present creationism.

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Antiscience bill in Mississippi dies](#) [12]

Oklahoma

House Bill 3045

Aim: Would deprive administrators of the ability to prevent teachers from miseducating students about "scientific controversies."

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Two \(or three\) down in Oklahoma](#) [13]

House Bill 3077

Aim: Entitled "the Oklahoma Academic Freedom Act of 2016"; text was never submitted.

Status: Died in committee.

Links:

[Two \(or three\) down in Oklahoma](#) [13]

Senate Bill 1322

Aim: Would deprive administrators of the ability to prevent teachers from miseducating students about "scientific controversies."

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Antiscience bill dies in Oklahoma](#) [14]

South Dakota

Senate Bill 83

Aim: Would have allowed teachers to present "the strengths and weaknesses of scientific information" presented in courses aligned with the state education standards.

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Antiscience bill in South Dakota dies](#) [15]

West Virginia

House Bill 4014

Aim: Would have repealed the newly adopted state science standards, in part because of their inclusion of climate change.

Status: Amended to require only the review of the standards by academics at the state's public universities; passed.

Links:

[Attack on science standards in West Virginia blunted](#) [16]

NATIONAL

House/Senate

Senate Bill 3074, House Bill 1961

Climate Change Education Act

Aim: Would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to create a Climate Change Education Program geared towards teaching students and others about climate change

Status: Stalled in committee

Links:

[Honda and Markey on the Climate Change Education Act](#) [17]

[Climate change education bills in Congress](#) [18]

CONTACT: Robert Luhn, Director of Communications, NCSE, 510-601-7203, luhn@ncse.com [19]

Web site: www.ncse.com [20]

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a not-for-profit membership organization that defends the teaching of evolution and climate science. The NCSE provides information, resources, and advice to schools, teachers, parents, and concerned citizens defending science education. We educate the press and public about the scientific, educational, and legal aspects of these issues at local, state, and national levels. Our 5000 members are scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious and political affiliations.

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