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[Home](#) > Florida's antiscience bills denounced

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[Florida's antiscience bills denounced](#) [3]



Florida's [House Bill 989](#) [4] and [Senate Bill 1210](#) [5] — bills aimed at empowering taxpayers to object to the use of specific instructional materials in the public schools, with climate change and evolution clearly among the targets — were the subjects of sharp criticism in a pair of commentaries.

Writing in the *Tallahassee Democrat* (April 14, 2017), Brandon Haught of Florida Citizens for Science [warned](#) [6] that if these bill become law, "school boards will become inundated with demands that certain books be banned and that schools must discontinue using textbooks that don't mesh with a vocal minority's ideological views." As evidence, he cited affidavits submitted by the bills' supporters that complain, "I have witnessed students being taught evolution as a fact of creation rather than a theory," and "I have witnessed children being taught that Global Warming is a reality." If legislators fail to recognize the problems with the bill, he concluded, "school boards, teachers, communities and students will suffer the consequences."

Writing in the *Gainesville Sun* (April 14, 2017), Jiri Hulcr, Andrea Lucky, and Brandon Haught [presented](#) [7] the case against HB 989 and SB 1210 vividly: "Imagine a crazy law that would empower anyone, regardless of credentials or expertise, to alter their local school's curriculum, and would require the school board to hire and pay a legal specialist to be an arbiter between the school and special interest groups. This is a very real possibility if the current instructional materials bill, HB 989/SB 1210, passes." They asked, "Do our schools need more legal burdens? Do we really want to force school boards to have to hire, and pay for, hearing officials? Can we afford to allow elected officials to support ideological

interest groups in dictating the quality of public education?"

HB 989 passed the House Education Committee on April 6, 2017, and may be heard on the House floor as early as April 18, 2017. Its counterpart, SB 1210, having passed the Senate Education Committee on March 27, 2017, is presently in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[Anti-Evolution](#) [8]

[Climate Change](#) [9]

[Legislation](#) [10]

[2017](#) [11]

[Florida](#) [12]

[+ read](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/18512>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/glenn>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2017/04/floridas-antiscience-bills-denounced-0018512>

[4] <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=58685>

[5] <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/1210/?Tab=BillText>

[6] <http://www.tallahassee.com/story/opinion/2017/04/14/haught-anti-science-education-bill-benign/100456818/>

[7] <http://www.gainesville.com/opinion/20170414/jiri-hulcr-andrea-lucky-and-brandon-haught-bill-seeks-to-hijack-educational-standards>

[8] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

[9] <https://ncse.com/news/climate-change>

[10] <https://ncse.com/news/legislation>

[11] <https://ncse.com/news/2017>

[12] <https://ncse.com/news/florida>