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Florida's [Senate Bill 966](#) [4], prefiled on November 17, 2017, would, if enacted, require "[c]ontroversial theories and concepts ... [to] be taught in a factual, objective, and balanced manner," while allowing local school districts to use either the state science standards or alternatives "equivalent to or more rigorous than" them.

Although there is no indication in the bill about which "theories and concepts" are deemed to be "controversial," much less any guidance about adjudicating disputes about which are and which are not, it is suggestive that the bill's sole sponsor, Dennis Baxley (R-District 12), has a history of antievolution advocacy.

In 2005, while serving in the Florida House of Representatives, Baxley introduced House Bill 837, concerning academic freedom in postsecondary education, reportedly citing a "tirade" against creationism he was subjected to as a student at Florida State University as the impetus for the bill. The bill ultimately died.

Similarly, the *Orlando Sentinel* (November 20, 2017) [reported](#) [5], "Baxley, then [in 2008, when new science standards were adopted in Florida] executive director of the Christian Coalition of Florida, said at the time he wanted scientists to 'leave the door open a little bit' for the consideration of other evidence about how life on earth developed."

Brandon Haught of Florida Citizens for Science [commented](#) [6], "There are plenty of other things in this new controversial theories bill about other academic subjects that could potentially raise alarms for those teachers and subject matter experts. But our focus is, of course, the clear attack on science education, specifically evolution and climate change."

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