



April 4, 2012

Dear Oklahoma State Senator:

On behalf of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), I encourage you to oppose passage of HB 2341, as long as it contains the legislative language from HB 1551.

Scientists in Oklahoma are deeply concerned about this legislation and the negative message it sends to the rest of the country. The best and brightest scientists, whether working for a university, teaching in a K-12 classroom, or working for a private sector company, want to work in an environment that appreciates the nature of science, not one that periodically redefines science in service to political agendas.

The economy and jobs of the future, whether in manufacturing, research and development, or energy and aerospace, require workers who have an understanding of scientific concepts and are skilled at thinking scientifically. This requires a quality science education, one free of political mandates. If enacted, the provisions of HB 1551 and now HB 2341 would merely offer a vehicle for advocates of particular political or religious belief systems to introduce their personal ideologies into the science curriculum.

Advocates for this and similar legislation often assert that evolution and climate change are controversial subjects. Any controversy is purely political. There is no legitimate scientific controversy about evolution or climate change. Scientists have, and continue to, empirically test these concepts and with each test the evidence grows stronger and our understanding more thorough.

This legislation is similar to measures supported by advocates for creationism in other states. We urge you to respect science, science teachers, and religion by opposing passage of HB 1551 and HB 2341.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. O'Grady", written over a horizontal line.

Richard T. O'Grady, Ph.D.
Executive Director