



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

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Chief Executive Officer and
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June 10, 2008

Speaker of the House Jim Tucker
Louisiana House of Representatives
State Capitol Building PO Box 94062
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9062

Dear Rep. Tucker:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, I am writing to voice our opposition to Senate Bill 733, the Louisiana Science Education Act. This bill appears designed to insert religious or unscientific views into science classrooms.

The bill implies that particular theories are controversial among scientists, including evolution. But there is virtually no controversy about evolution among the overwhelming majority of researchers. The science of evolution underpins all of modern biology and is supported by tens of thousands of scientific studies in fields that include cosmology, geology, paleontology, genetics and other biological specialties. It informs scientific research in a broad range of fields such as agriculture and medicine, work that has an important impact on our everyday lives.

Backers of the bill, including the Louisiana Family Forum and the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, are longtime supporters of attempts to teach creationism or intelligent design as science. The judicial courts have ruled that both of these are religious concepts that do not belong in public school science classrooms. In fact, it was Louisiana's own "creation science" law that the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional in 1987.

Louisiana students need a firm understanding of evolution and other essential scientific concepts to compete for high-skill jobs in an increasingly high-tech world economy. Asserting that there are controversies about these concepts among scientists – when in fact there are not – will only confuse them. I urge you to protect the future of science education in your state by rejecting this bill.

AAAS represents the interests of ten million scientists worldwide, and is the publisher of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*. Founded in 1848, AAAS has a longstanding interest and expertise in science education. We stand ready to assist you in any way that would be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan I. Leshner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'A'.

Alan I. Leshner

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