

June 13, 2008

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Jindal:

The undersigned scientific societies urge you to oppose SB 733, the so-called "Louisiana Science Education Act." This legislation should be vetoed if it reaches your desk.

As a Brown University biology graduate and past president of the University of Louisiana System, we sincerely hope that you recognize the folly of permitting SB 733 to become law. As the former Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, you know first hand the importance of science to a healthy population. It is difficult to understand how Louisiana or the nation can recruit and educate the quality healthcare providers our citizens deserve if we are willing to sacrifice science education in our K-12 classrooms. If SB 733 is signed into law, Louisiana will undoubtedly be thrust into the national spotlight as a state that pursues politics over science and education.

SB 733 is the latest attempt by a small group of individuals with a specific political agenda to insert non-scientific concepts into the classroom by seeking to skirt the United States Constitution and the nature of scientific investigation. Advocates for SB 733 seek to manufacture questions that do not exist around issues such as evolution and climate change. SB 733 would require that teachers consider and accept non-scientific explanations for natural phenomena, including evolution, the origins of life, and global warming. Supernatural explanations for these phenomena are not scientifically testable and are not science. Further, scientific concepts and theories are not decided by public opinion polls or by petitions, but through the rigorous method by which scientists conduct and evaluate research. By promoting the discussion of patently non-scientific ideas in the science classroom, SB 733 threatens the quality of science education and risks setting the students of Louisiana well behind their national and international counterparts.

The future educational, employment, and economic growth of Louisiana and the United States depends upon a scientifically literate workforce and a population capable of making informed decisions. A strong foundation in science that includes an understanding of evolution is required to fuel the advances in research, development, and innovation that will help Louisiana increase economic growth from new jobs and opportunities arising from science and technology.

In closing, please oppose passage of SB 733.

Respectfully,

American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Ornithologists Union
American Society of Mammalogists
Botanical Society of America
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology
Society of Systematic Biologists
Society for the Study of Evolution