



April 20, 2011

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Dear Senator:

The Louisiana Science Teachers Association urges the repeal of the Louisiana Science Education Act, R.S. 17:285.1, which was passed by the Louisiana Legislature in 2008. The bill does not support effective science teaching in Louisiana public schools. It is the view of this association that the legislation undermines years of work to improve the teaching and learning of science in our schools. This legislative effort is an attack on scientific evidence to allow the teaching of a religious belief in science class, a direct violation of the United States Constitution.

Many LSTA members have served on educational panels as the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) developed our state science standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations (GLEs). In all steps of the process, we as science educators worked to make sure that the teaching of science in all courses and at all levels provides opportunities for open discussion, critical thinking, and problem solving. The Louisiana Science documents are based on the work of scientific associations and educational communities such as the National Academy of Sciences, the American Physical Society, the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

In addition, the presence of this legislation places Louisiana in a precarious position with science/research-based industry. At a moment in time when Louisiana is in search of new economic development we can least afford such a dramatic step backward. Presently, Louisiana is the home to several research facilities that attract scientists from around the world, e.g., Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO), the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, and the National Wetlands Research Center to name a few. As university faculty apply to the National Science Foundation for project funding and awards the LDoE efforts to improve science education should be unquestioned. We risk the chance of losing highly educated adults and their children to other states.

It is with a great sense of urgency that the Louisiana Science Teachers Association requests the repeal of Louisiana Science Education Act, R.S. 17:285.1.

Respectfully yours,

Shannon Lafont
President, Louisiana Science Teachers Association

LSTA...an organization of Louisiana science educators dedicated to improving science education for all students.