



The Society for the Study of Evolution

2 May 2011

Dear Governor Jindal,

We urge you to support the effort to repeal the 2008 Louisiana Science Education Act. This act is one example of the so-called “Academic Freedom” bills, a misleading title for what are widely recognized as Intelligent Design (ID) creationist initiatives. The bill has opened the door to teaching creationist arguments against evolution – arguments that are wholly unscientific – as part of the science curriculum.

There are no credible “arguments against evolution” that undermine the wealth of empirical evidence that supports evolutionary science. It is telling that we do not see similar arguments for teaching “critical evidence” against chemistry or physics. It is *evolution* that is the unique object of these bills, and that shows they are motivated not by a desire to teach good science but rather to further creationism in Louisiana schools. The research that the members of the Society for the Study of Evolution, the Society of Systematic Biologists, and thousands of other biologists do broadens and deepens our understanding of the evolutionary forces that have shaped and continue to shape the biological world. The practical benefits of evolutionary science are felt every day in agriculture, fisheries, industry and medicine.

Our country is a world leader in scientific achievement. The achievements of biology in particular rest on the unifying theory of biology – evolution. We must provide a rigorous science curriculum so our children will be well prepared for the future, achieving the scientific goals for their generation and providing a scientifically literate work force to sustain and attract leading businesses. The children and the future of Louisiana will be poorly served by the kind of a sub-standard education that is the inevitable consequence of these “academic freedom” bills.

Because the 2008 Science Education Act undermines the education of Louisiana’s children, it must be repealed.

Please support the repeal of the 2008 Louisiana Science Education and stand behind Zack Kopplin and the other children of Louisiana who deserve the best science education possible.

Sincerely,

Jerry Coyne, *President, Society for the Study of Evolution*

Scott V. Edwards, *President Elect, Society for the Study of Evolution*

Thomas Meagher, *Chair, SSE Education Committee*

David Mindell, *President, Society of Systematic Biologists*

Robert E. Ricklefs, *President, American Society of Naturalists*