

Examining Senator Kruse's and
Representative Thompson's Current
Attempts to Legislate Teaching Religion
in Science Class with Four Lenses:
Science, Religion, Law, and Truth

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- Senator Kruse did not submit a bill in the Senate.
- Representative Thompson submitted a bill in the House of Representatives, HB 1283.
- Local newspaper articles reported that both legislators have interacted with each other and the Discovery Institute in developing legislation.

House Bill 1283

A. The general assembly finds that:

1. An important educational purpose is to inform students about evidence and to help students **develop critical thinking skills** necessary to become intelligent, productive, and informed citizens.
2. Some subjects, including but not limited to, science, history and health have produced differing conclusions and theories on some topics.
3. Some teachers may be unsure of expectations concerning how the teachers should present information and evidence on these topics.

House Bill 1283 - Cont'd

B. This section applies to accredited schools.

C. The state board, department, governing bodies, governing authorities of accredited nonpublic schools, superintendents, principals, and other administrators shall endeavor to create an environment with accredited schools that encourages students to explore questions, learn about evidence, **develop critical thinking skills**, and respond appropriately and respectfully to different conclusions and theories concerning subjects set forth in subsection (a)(2).

House Bill 1283 - Cont'd

D. The state board, department, governing bodies, governing authorities of accredited nonpublic schools may endeavor to assist teachers in finding effective ways to present the curriculum as the curriculum addresses subjects set forth in subsection (A)(2). A teacher shall be allowed to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the **strengths and weaknesses** of conclusions and theories being presented in a course taught by the teacher.

House Bill 1283 - Cont'd

E. The state board, department, governing bodies, governing authorities of accredited nonpublic schools, superintendents, principals, and other administrators may not prohibit a teacher in an accredited school from helping students to understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the **strengths and weaknesses** of existing conclusions and theories being presented in a course being taught by the teacher.

House Bill 1283 - Cont'd

F. This section may not be construed to promote:

1. Any religious or non religious doctrine.
2. Discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs.
3. Discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.

"Death" of HB 1283

- Rep. Behning indicated that HB 1283 would not receive a hearing in the current session because of the large number of bills and the limited time to discuss them.
- HB 1283 did not receive a committee hearing even though education is a high priority in this session.
- Why? My hypothesis: Indiana legislators are concerned that schools could be sued, lose, and required to pay huge legal fees

Scientific Controversy about Evolution?

2009 Pew Research Center Poll found that:

~ 97% of scientists say that humans and other living things have evolved over time.

~ 87% of scientists say that evolution involves natural processes such as natural selection.

No.

Social Controversy about Evolution?

- ~ 32% of the public say that living things have evolved via natural processes.

Yes!

Discovery Institute

- Leading advocate of Intelligent Design Theory.
- Shifted its direction of advocacy following the Kitzmiller v Dover case.
- Now emphasizes academic freedom in teaching about science controversies.

Academic Freedom: Education Policy by the Discovery Institute, February 11, 2013

- DI opposes any effort to require the teaching of intelligent design by school districts or state boards of education. Attempts to mandate teaching about intelligent design only politicize the theory and will hinder fair and open discussion of its merits. Most teachers do not know enough about intelligent design to teach it accurately and objectively.
- DI seeks to increase the coverage of evolution in textbooks. Evolution should be fully and completely presented to students. They should learn more about evolutionary theory, including its unresolved issues. In other words, evolution should be taught as a scientific theory that is open to critical scrutiny, not as a sacred dogma that can't be questioned.

Discovery Institute Academic Freedom Education Policy - Cont'd

- DI believes that a curriculum that aims to provide students with an understanding of the **strengths and weaknesses** of neo-Darwinian and chemical evolutionary theories (rather than teaching an alternative theory, such as intelligent design) represents a common ground approach that all reasonable citizens can agree on.
- Seven states (Alabama, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas) have science standards that require learning about some of the **scientific controversies** relating to evolution. Texas's science standards require that students "analyze, evaluate and critique scientific explanations ... including examining all sides of scientific evidence of those scientific explanations so as to encourage critical thinking." Texas also requires students to "analyze and evaluate" core evolutionary claims including "common ancestry," "natural selection," "mutation," and the formation of "long complex molecules having information such as the DNA molecule for self-replicating life."

Discovery Institute Academic Freedom Education Policy - Cont'd

- Three states (Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi) adopted statutes that protect teachers' and/or students' rights to discuss the scientific evidence for and against Darwinian evolution or other scientific theories in the curriculum. Tennessee law permits teachers "to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course being taught." Also, Tennessee law "only protects the teaching of scientific information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion."
 - The U.S. Supreme Court in *Edwards v. Aguillard* strongly affirmed the individual teacher's right to academic freedom. It also recognized that, while the statute requiring the teaching of creationism in that case was unconstitutional, "...teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to schoolchildren might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction." *
- * Point made in Justice Scalia's dissenting opinion

First Amendment

- Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District

- Dover, PA
 - Rural, blue collar community
 - Population ~ 22,000
 - 20 miles south of Harrisburg
- Site of the first court test of the constitutionality of intelligent design

Judge' s Ruling, 12-20-05

- Dover' s ID Policy is unconstitutional according to the 1st Amendment of U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 3 of the Pennsylvania Constitution
- ID is not science
- ID is a strong endorsement of a religious view
- Exposed logical fallacy that evidence against evolution equals evidence for ID

Source: Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District, et. al. No. 04cv2688 (M.D. PA., December 20, 2005).

How Might Kitzmiller v. Dover Apply to Indiana?

What is the purpose for:

- singling out evolution for special criticism?
- Defining science to allow non-scientific explanations?

According to the Lemon Test, the intent and effect of an action must not advance religion, and the action must not entangle government and religion.

Intent: 20-Year Goals for ID

- To see ID as the dominant scientific perspective
- To see ID theory applied across the natural and social sciences, humanities, and arts
- To see ID permeate our religious, cultural, moral, and political life

Excerpted from the "Wedge Strategy"

<http://www.antievolution.org/features/wedge.html> and cited in Burke, E. (2003). Intelligent design creationism: A threat to society - not just biology. *The American Biology Teacher*, 65(9), 646-648).

Example of DI Activists' Thinking

“From the sixth century up to the Enlightenment it is safe to say that the West was thoroughly imbued with Christian ideals and that Western intellectual elites were overwhelmingly Christian. False ideas that undermined the very foundations of the Christian faith (e.g., denying the resurrection or the Trinity) were swiftly challenged and uprooted. Since the Enlightenment, however, we have not so much lacked the means to combat false ideas as the will and clarity” (p. 20).

Dembski, W.A. & Richards, J.W (2001). *Unapologetic apologetics*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Burke, E. (2003). Intelligent design creationism: A threat to society - not just biology. *The American Biology Teacher*, 65(9), 646-648).

Another Example

“The scientific picture of the world championed since the Enlightenment is not just wrong but massively wrong. Indeed entire fields of inquiry, especially in the human sciences, will need to be rethought from the ground up in terms of intelligent design” (p. 224).

Dembski, W.A. (1999). *Intelligent design: The bridge between science and theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Burke, E. (2003). Intelligent design creationism: A threat to society - not just biology. *The American Biology Teacher*, 65(9), 646-648).

Two Unavoidable Questions about Intelligent Design

- When were life, earth and the universe designed?
- Who is the designer?

Answer to “When” Leads to Answer to “Who”?

When were life, earth, and the universe designed?

- Life: ~ 3.5 billion years ago
- Earth: ~ 4.54 billion years ago
- Universe: ~ 12-13 billion years ago

God is my answer. Do we know another who is this old and beyond nature?

The Four Lenses: Science, Religion, Law, Truth

- ID is not science. Open questions and unresolved issues are not necessarily strengths and weaknesses.
- ID is a religious view; God is the designer.
- A federal district court has ruled that ID is a strong endorsement of a religious view.
- The DI is compromising its integrity when it advocates legislative text that includes "may not be construed to promote religion" when the intent is to promote a religious view.

Questions?

Comments?