



Florida Family Policy Council

MEDIA ADVISORY ALERT

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For Immediate Release

February 19, 2008

State Board of Education Approves Evolution- Science Standards With Symbolic Change

Board Rejects Academic Freedom Amendment to Protect Public School Teachers

(TALLAHASSEE, FL) This morning the State Board of Education (SBOE) by a 3-4 vote approved the new Florida Science Standards which presents macro evolution as "*the* fundamental concept underlying all of biology, and is supported by multiple forms of scientific evidence." They simultaneously failed to adopt a simple one sentence proposal which would protect teachers and afford them a bright line to know that they can present evidence critical of evolution without fear of being disciplined, reprimanded or fired.

Instead the SBOE adopted a symbolic amendment which describes evolution as a "scientific theory" along with other theories. "This is a meaningless change to try and placate the people of Florida who were very upset at the arrogance in the way evolution is described in the standards." said Florida Family Policy Council President, John Stemberger. "This is a sad day in Florida, when a handful of religious Darwinists can hijack the curriculum framing process and push their ideological agenda at the expense of the education our children."

"I'm extremely disappointed that the Board of Education approved standards that do not allow for academic freedom and protection for teachers who teach the weaknesses in Darwinism." said Kim Kendall, a concerned parent from St. John's County who has helped lead the effort to allow evolution taught with no gag order placed on the teachers.

Ten persons were allowed to speak on each side of the debate. During public testimony prior to the Board's vote, members of a coalition of parents, scientists, public school teachers and policy experts stressed that they were not opposing the inclusion of evolution per se in the science curriculum, but were opposing an attempt to present evolution dogmatically and censor relevant scientific evidence critical of the theory. All of those

opposed to parts of the standards spoke in favor of the Academic Freedom Amendment.

Fred Cutting, a member of the Framers Committee who voted against the proposed science standards was present to describe the biased process that had taken place within the original committee rewriting the standards. "The life-sciences sub-committee was very one-sided and narrow in its final views. The evolution standards approved today are dogmatic and not scientifically neutral," Cutting said.

The Florida Family Policy Council is expected to pursue legislative action to protect teachers and academic freedom in the classroom.

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Copies of many of the ten statements made at the hearing for those opposing the standards are online below:

Academic Freedom Proposal that was Rejected

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Academic%20Freedom%20Proposal.pdf>

John Stemberger, Attorney and President of Florida Family Policy Council

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/John%20Stemberger.pdf>

Robin Brown, Public School Teacher

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Robin%20Brown.pdf>

Patricia Weeks, Chairman of the School Board, Baker County

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Patricia%20Weeks.pdf>

Doug Oliver, Professor of Biology at Liberty University

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Doug%20Oliver%20.pdf>

David Brackin, Public School Teacher

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/David%20Brackin.pdf>

Fred Cutting, Aerospace Engineer and member of the Framers Committee

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Fred%20Cutting%20-%20BOE.pdf>

Lori Mueller, Teacher and Mother

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Lori%20Muller.pdf>

Rich Akin, CEO, Physicians and Surgeons for Scientific Integrity

<http://www.flfamily.org/uploadfile/2008%20-%20upload/Rich%20Akin.pdf>

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