



## The Society for the Study of Evolution

June 22, 2008

Dear Governor Jindal,

We urge you to veto the LA Science Education Act (SB 733). This is an example of the so-called “Academic Freedom” bills, a misleading title for what is well known to be an Intelligent Design (ID) creationist initiative. The bill aims to open the door to teaching creationist arguments against evolution, which falsely claim to be scientific.

There are no credible “arguments against evolution” that undermine the wealth of empirical evidence that supports evolutionary science. 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, industry and medicine. Surely Louisiana needs the benefits of sound biology.

To open the classroom door to ID and other pseudo-scientific views does not advance critical thinking; rather, it undermines the very notion of critical standards and advances the worst form of intellectual relativism. It does not advance academic freedom; rather, it is academic irresponsibility and supports those who would undermine professional scientific standards and values. It does not benefit the students of Louisiana; rather it puts them at an educational disadvantage that ill-prepares them for college and sets them back relative to their peers in states that demand a sound science education.

This is not a fight between religion and science – rather SB 733 is an attempt by proponents of an extreme religious view to get their beliefs taught in science classes. As such, it is as much an affront to mainstream religious believers and to basic American political values as it is to science and science education.

You alone now have the power to do the right thing in Louisiana. Do not be deceived by those who would undermine the integrity of science. Scientists and concerned citizens around the country are watching. Please veto this bill and tell its supporters that it is a mistake for the state and its children.

Sincerely,

Johanna Schmitt  
President, Society for the Study of Evolution  
Stephen T. Olney Prof. of Natural History, Brown Univ.

David Penny  
President, Society of Systematic Biologists

Craig Moritz  
President Elect, Society for the Study of Evolution

Robert T. Pennock  
Chair, SSE Education Committee