

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 2355, which mandates the inclusion of intelligent design in the state science content standards for elementary, middle, and high school students. This proposal raises significant concerns regarding the integrity of science education, the constitutional separation of church and state, and the future competitiveness of our students.

1. Intelligent Design Lacks Scientific Foundation

The scientific community overwhelmingly agrees that intelligent design is not a scientific theory but a form of creationism. It lacks empirical support and does not adhere to the scientific method, as it does not provide testable hypotheses or predictive value. The National Academy of Sciences has stated that "creationism, intelligent design, and other claims of supernatural intervention in the origin of life or of species are not science because they are not testable by the methods of science." Including intelligent design in science curricula would misrepresent non-scientific ideas as scientific, undermining the quality of education.

2. Constitutional Concerns

Mandating the teaching of intelligent design in public schools raises serious constitutional issues. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently ruled that teaching creationism in public school science classes violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which prohibits government endorsement of religion. Intelligent design, being a rebranded form of creationism, falls under this prohibition. Implementing this bill could lead to costly legal challenges and potential violations of students' religious freedoms.

3. Impact on Students' Competitiveness

Integrating non-scientific concepts like intelligent design into the science curriculum can hinder students' understanding of established scientific principles, such as evolution. This educational approach may leave students ill-prepared for higher education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Employers and academic institutions expect proficiency in scientifically validated concepts, and diverting instructional time to unscientific ideas could disadvantage our students in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Senate Bill 2355's requirement to include intelligent design in the state science content standards is misguided. It threatens the quality of science education, poses constitutional risks, and could impair the future success of our students. I urge you to reject this bill and instead support educational policies that uphold rigorous scientific standards and prepare our students for the challenges of the modern world.

Sincerely,

Savannah Elkins