

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 2355, which seeks to mandate the teaching of creationism in science classes across North Dakota. This bill raises several significant concerns regarding the integrity of science education, the separation of church and state, and the professional responsibilities of our educators.

Firstly, creationism does not adhere to the principles of the scientific method. The scientific method is a rigorous process that involves making observations, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments, and analyzing results to draw conclusions. This method relies on empirical evidence and reproducibility. Creationism, however, is based on religious beliefs and lacks empirical support and testability. It does not provide a framework for making predictions or conducting experiments that can be independently verified.

Science education should focus on teaching students well-established scientific theories and principles that are supported by extensive research and evidence. Evolution, for example, is a cornerstone of modern biology and is supported by a vast body of evidence from various scientific disciplines. Teaching creationism in science classes undermines the quality of science education and confuses students about the nature of scientific inquiry.

Christians should be concerned about this bill. If the science vs religion debate plays out in science classrooms, creationism will lose. When creationism is subjected to scientific scrutiny, it does not hold up and can become a case study for students to see what science is not. This could lead to students viewing creationism as an example of failed science, which is not the intention of religious teachings. It is more appropriate for creationism to be taught in religious settings, where its spiritual and moral significance can be properly conveyed, rather than in science classes where it may be discredited. This is a reason why we must uphold the separation of Church and State.

Senate Bill 2355 is unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently ruled that teaching creationism or intelligent design in public schools violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. In cases such as *Edwards v. Aguillard* and *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*, the courts have determined that promoting religious doctrines in public school science curricula is an impermissible endorsement of religion by the state.

Moreover, Senate Bill 2355 represents a clear example of government overreach. The state should not dictate the specifics of science curricula, especially when it involves promoting religious views. Our educators are trained professionals who understand how to teach their subjects effectively. Imposing such requirements undermines their expertise and autonomy, and it sends a message that the state does not trust them to do their jobs. This kind of micromanagement is detrimental to the educational environment and to the morale of our teachers. Such a mandate could drive dedicated teachers out of our state, as they seek

environments where they can teach science without compromising their professional standards and personal beliefs.

This bill clearly is backed by out of state interests that have a national agenda to undermine The Constitution of the United States. It will make North Dakota a battleground for litigation which will consume tax dollars that could be used to address more important issues in the state. Our legislature, being a Republican majority, should not stand for this. What happened to the party that had the principles of upholding the constitution, limited government, federalism, freedom, and local control?

In conclusion, I urge you to reject Senate Bill 2355. Our students deserve a robust science education that prepares them for the challenges of the future, grounded in evidence-based scientific principles. Religious beliefs, while important, should be taught in appropriate settings such as Sunday schools, not in public school science classes.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Austin Cote

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