

By Senator Storms

10-03403A-08

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to teaching chemical and biological  
3           evolution; providing a short title; providing  
4           legislative intent; providing public school teachers  
5           with a right to present scientific information relevant  
6           to the full range of views on biological and chemical  
7           origins; prohibiting a teacher from being discriminated  
8           against for presenting such information; prohibiting  
9           students from being penalized for subscribing to a  
10          particular position on evolution; clarifying that the  
11          act does not require any change in state curriculum  
12          standards or promote any religious position; providing  
13          an effective date.

14  
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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17           Section 1. (1) This section may be cited as the "Academic  
18 Freedom Act."

19           (2) The Legislature finds that current law does not  
20 expressly protect the right of teachers to objectively present  
21 scientific information relevant to the full range of scientific  
22 views regarding chemical and biological evolution. The  
23 Legislature finds that in many instances educators have  
24 experienced or feared discipline, discrimination, or other  
25 adverse consequences as a result of presenting the full range of  
26 scientific views regarding chemical and biological evolution. The  
27 Legislature further finds that existing law does not expressly  
28 protect students from discrimination due to their positions or  
29 views regarding biological or chemical evolution. The Legislature

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30 finds that the topic of biological and chemical evolution has  
31 generated intense controversy about the rights of teachers and  
32 students to hold differing views on those subjects. It is  
33 therefore the intent of the Legislature that this section  
34 expressly protects those rights.

35 (3) Every public school teacher in the state's K-12 school  
36 system shall have the affirmative right and freedom to  
37 objectively present scientific information relevant to the full  
38 range of scientific views regarding biological and chemical  
39 evolution in connection with teaching any prescribed curriculum  
40 regarding chemical or biological origins.

41 (4) A public school teacher in the state's K-12 school  
42 system may not be disciplined, denied tenure, terminated, or  
43 otherwise discriminated against for objectively presenting  
44 scientific information relevant to the full range of scientific  
45 views regarding biological or chemical evolution in connection  
46 with teaching any prescribed curriculum regarding chemical or  
47 biological origins.

48 (5) Public school students in the state's K-12 school  
49 system may be evaluated based upon their understanding of course  
50 materials, but may not be penalized in any way because he or she  
51 subscribes to a particular position or view regarding biological  
52 or chemical evolution.

53 (6) The rights and privileges contained in this section  
54 apply when the subject of biological or chemical origins is part  
55 of the curriculum. The provisions of this section do not require  
56 or encourage any change in the state curriculum standards for the  
57 K-12 public school system.

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58        (7) This section shall not be construed to promote any  
59 religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a  
60 particular set of religious beliefs, or promote discrimination  
61 for or against religion or nonreligion.

62        Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2008.