

**WHY
OKLAHOMA HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1093
IS BAD FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION**

By Dr. Frank J. Sonleitner

This resolution states:

“THAT the Legislature encourage the State Board of Education and local boards of education to revise the recommended academic curriculum content standards in science to ensure that, upon graduation, all students can accomplish the following:

1. Use of the scientific method to critically evaluate scientific theories including, but not limited to, the theory of evolution; and
2. Use of relevant scientific data to assess the validity of those theories and to formulate arguments for and against those theories.”

What could possibly be bad about that?

The resolution relies heavily on the Santorum amendment for its wording. The Santorum amendment was actually written by Phillip Johnson, the leader of the Intelligent Design Movement to provide government justification for teaching intelligent design in the public schools.

Stripped of any theological implications, Intelligent Design, and its predecessor Creation Science, are simply a list of arguments against evolution. These *are the only arguments* against evolution. They are essentially the same as those of the Creation Scientists (which are illegal to teach) and are distorted or outright false claims based on their own “strawman” caricature of evolution (example: “Darwin said that one day two apes got together and had human babies”). Built into this caricature is the conclusion that there are *no arguments in favor* of evolution.

Due to the time constraints of the school year and the requirement to teach many other biological topics in the biology course, those teachers who teach evolution can only allot a week or less to do so. This necessarily results in a highly simplified and superficial treatment of evolution. The students are in no way intellectually prepared to intelligently examine, evaluate and debate arguments for and against evolution. They will be especially incapable of evaluating the dishonest arguments against it. Furthermore, the time needed to carry out this futile exercise will undoubtedly be subtracted from the limited time used to teach evolution in the first place.

The resolution will provide justification for creationist biology teachers to simply teach the creation science caricature of evolution with its built in arguments against and no arguments in favor! This is probably already being done in many public schools and has recently been tried at the college level. See:

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/03/AR2006020300822.html.

Note: The arguments against evolution included in the Intelligent Design books *Of Pandas and People* and *Icons of Evolution* are examined in detail and refuted on the National Center for Science Education website www.ncseweb.org. Many other Creation science arguments are thoroughly refuted at the Talk Origins website www.talkorigins.org/.

The Santorum amendment was left out of the final version of the No Child Left Behind Act and, since the Dover trial, Senator Santorum has changed his mind about the teaching of Intelligent Design. Also, the Ohio Board of Education has just dropped its “Critical Analysis of Evolution” model lesson plan from its science standards.

Finally, this resolution is superfluous because critically examining scientific ideas and conclusions is already part of the current Oklahoma Science Standards (although they don't specifically mention evolution.)