

Why SB 1765 by Brecheen Is a Bad Bill

The bill is unnecessary, as its main points are effectively covered by existing Oklahoma curriculum standards. Nothing in the bill explains why we need a new state law specifying what teachers already (are required to) do and have been doing for decades. While superficially it is nothing but a waste of time, **the bill has ulterior motives if one knows the creationist code in which the bill is written and these motives have nothing to do with science or critical thinking.**

- **Sen. Brecheen's own words make his anti-science intentions abundantly clear.** He has stated in the press (that he would), “introduce a bill to place creationism into public schools”; and later, “I have introduced legislation requiring every publicly funded Oklahoma school to teach the debate of creation vs. evolution using the known science, even that which conflicts with Darwin’s religion.”

- There are two well known, **anti-science tactics in this bill:**

- 1. The catchphrase “scientific strengths and weaknesses”** was developed by a creationist think tank (Discovery Institute) and used in its model “academic freedom act”. This includes prefabricated language that has been introduced in many state legislatures (but passed only in Tennessee and Louisiana, where it is now being challenged). The sole purpose of such bills **is to provide cover to those that would promote the illegitimate “scientific creationism” or “intelligent design” in school science classes.**
- 2. The bill promotes the use of “scientific information” by teachers in presenting controversial topics. “Scientific information” is a loaded term that is not defined in the bill.** Anyone with any understanding of science would have instead referred to “scientific evidence”, “testable hypotheses”, “experiments”, or “peer reviewed publications”. **“Scientific information” could mean anything that sounds “sciency”, from crackpot pseudoscience websites to the creationist “curriculum” available from the Discovery Institute.** This is, again, a code-phrase understood by those who would introduce pseudoscience into science classes.
 - **SB 1765 is nothing but a sham,** intended to allow back-door promotion of religiously motivated, anti-science material into Oklahoma science classes.
 - It is telling that **no teacher group or scientific organization supports this bill;** support comes exclusively from religious groups.
 - **In effect this bill would encourage students to simply reject the parts of science they don’t happen to like. This will clearly confuse our students about the nature of science, inhibit their ability to understand important scientific issues facing society, and reduce their competitiveness for science related jobs.**
 - Passage of bills such as SB 1765 will clearly **harm the ability of Oklahoma to attract scientists and science-based industries.**
 - If the creationist intentions of SB 1765 are actually implemented in the classroom, **school districts will undoubtedly face costly challenges in the courts, with costs borne by the taxpayers!**