

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 7

DATE 2-7-05

BILL NO. SJB

February 2, 2005

Dear Montana State Legislature,

As high school science teachers, we strongly encourage and support adoption of Senate Joint Resolution No. 8. Its importance cannot be overstated as science education is under continual attack from non-scientific, yet politically active, forces.

While the resolution will not hold the force of law, it will create an environment that emphatically denounces anti-scientific rhetoric and affirms that the State of Montana and its citizens will not be subjugated to the will of any person or persons demanding that religious doctrine be taught on equal footing with scientifically valid principles and theories.

The Establishment Clause, as enforced by the Lemon Test, is a vital part of our American heritage. Numerous cases have been brought to court involving what can and cannot be considered appropriate science education, and in every one, the accepted scientific viewpoint has prevailed. Adoption of this Joint Resolution will help to place Montana at the forefront of science education, and also prevent potential national and international embarrassment stemming from a tacit support of non-scientific interference.

We wholly support the right of local school districts to create individual science curricula tailored to the needs of their student populations, provided such curricula are both complete and conforming to currently valid scientific principles.

One of the most important lessons we can instill in our students is an understanding of the scientific way of thinking – its strengths, and its limitations. This is a vital step in fostering the critical thinking skills so necessary to succeed in our technologically advanced society.

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