



SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 13

DATE 2-7-05

BILL NO. SJ-8

February 6, 2005

Dear Legislators,

I write in support of SJR 8, because I'm extremely concerned that the quality of science education in Montana could be undermined by politically and religiously inspired efforts to eliminate or impair the teaching of evolutionary biology in our public schools

Some people argue that Charles Darwin's concept of evolution by natural selection is "just a theory." In fact, it IS a theory--which is to say, it's an explanation of observable facts. In the same sense, Isaac Newton's mathematical description of gravity is a theory. Electromagnetism is a theory. The view that Earth orbits around the sun, rather than vice versa, is a theory originally proposed by Copernicus. If a local school board chooses to outlaw the teaching of evolution, on the grounds that it's a theory, they should also banish gravity, electricity, and any wall posters portraying the heliocentric solar system.

The body of thought and belief known as "scientific creationism" is not a testable scientific theory. It is a scripture-based metaphysical outlook. There's nothing wrong with that. But if creationism is to be taught at all in the public schools, it should not be taught as an alternative to evolution. It should be taught in a class examining and comparing religious beliefs, along with such others as the idea that God created Earth in six days, the idea that Jesus was born of a virgin, the idea of Rama the Blue-Skinned god, and the Assiniboine idea that the dry land of Earth was formed when a great ancestral Muskrat dragged it up from beneath primeval seas.

My point is simply that we should keep science and metaphysics separate, just as we must maintain the separation between church and state. If we allow science teaching to be diluted in Montana's public schools by the intrusion of religious and political agendas, our schoolchildren will suffer most, when they find themselves unprepared to advance their education and compete in the larger modern world.

Sincerely,

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magazines  
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