



THE AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
CELL
BIOLOGY

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March 6, 2002

Ms. Jo Ann Thatcher
State Board of Education
Ohio Department of Education Building
25 S. Front Street, 7th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4183

Dear Ms. Thatcher,

We write on behalf of the American Society for Cell Biology, a non-profit professional society of 10,000 basic biomedical research scientists in academia, industry, and government laboratories throughout the United States and the world. About 200 ASCB members are Ohioans.

We were pleased by the Ohio State Board of Education's decision to solicit an outside review of state science curriculum from educators and scientists. As scientists, we concur with the panel's recommendations that the teaching of the theory of evolution be part of the state curriculum guidelines, because we believe that a basic science education without a firm grounding in evolutionary concepts would leave the student ill-prepared for further study or a career in the life sciences.

For this reason, we are appalled by recent attempts to inject the teaching of "Intelligent Design" into Ohio science curriculum guidelines. "Intelligent Design" is nothing but thinly veiled "Creationism." It is not a scientific theory but a matter of faith, and it does not belong in a science curriculum. Darwin's theory of natural selection is a central unifying concept in modern biology. It enables scientists to explore and understand natural processes from ecology to molecular and cellular biology. Imposing the doctrine of "Intelligent Design" in the science classroom will compromise students' understanding of modern biology and leave them with devalued academic credentials. Justifying the teaching of "Intelligent Design" to Ohio's science students with an equal-time argument is foolish.

This is also an issue for Ohio's economic future. The American Society for Cell Biology calls upon Ohio's educational leaders to work with Governor Taft in his initiative to foster high-tech and biotech industry in the state. Promoting "Intelligent Design" in science classrooms would undermine Ohio's scientific

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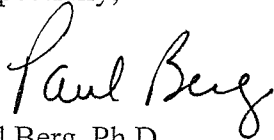
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Editor-in-Chief

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credibility, tarnish its reputation in the global scientific community, and compromise the state's ability to attract scientists and scientific entrepreneurs.

We urge the State Board of Education to avoid this divisive, counterproductive, and ultimately pointless controversy. Evolutionary theory has an immense impact on everything from controlling antibiotic resistance to treating cancer, and provides a platform that helps scientists understand diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, and congestive heart failure. If the Ohio State Board of Education opens the doors of our science classrooms to theology, the uproar will only get louder and louder, damaging Ohio's reputation, its economy, and most of all, its children.

Respectfully,



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