

Customer Service: [Subscribe Now](#) | [Manage your account](#) | [Place an Ad](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)

[GreenvilleOnline.com](#) • [Weather](#) • [Calendar](#) • [Jobs](#) • [Cars](#) • [Homes](#) • [Apartments](#) • [Classifieds](#) • [Shopping](#) • [Dating](#)



[Local News](#) • [Nation/World](#) • [Sports](#) • [Opinion](#) • [Obituaries](#) • [Communities](#) • [Entertainment](#) • [Travel](#)

7-day story search

Archive: [S](#) [M](#) [T](#) [W](#) [T](#) [F](#) [S](#)

Advertisement

CLASSES BEGIN
MARCH 6TH,
2006
[CLICK HERE](#)

Miss a day. Miss a lot.

Advertisement

The Greenville News [Subscribe Now](#)

Order 7 Day Delivery
Get a Free Gift
[Subscribe Now](#)

Tuesday, March 7 | [Upstate South Carolina News, Sports and Information](#)

[HOME](#)

[LOCAL NEWS](#)

[News](#)

[Business](#)

[Sports](#)

[Clemson](#)

[USC](#)

[Furman](#)

[High Schools](#)

[SAIL](#)

[Racing](#)

[Outdoors](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[Opinion](#)

[Photo galleries](#)

[Home & Garden](#)

[Education](#)

[Health](#)

[Politics](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Flair](#)

[Weddings](#)

[City People](#)

[Nation/World](#)

[Technology](#)

[Weather](#)

[COMMUNITIES](#)

[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

[TRAVEL](#)

[JOBS](#)

[CARS](#)

[HOMES](#)

[APARTMENTS](#)

[CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[SHOPPING](#)

[DATING](#)

[FORECLOSURES](#)

[Customer Service](#)

Advertisement

VILLAGE HOMES
VERDMONT
[click here!](#)

The Greenville

Threats to science education hurt religion, too

The theory of evolution doesn't conflict with the religious views of the vast majority of people.

Published: Tuesday, March 7, 2006 - 6:00 am

By Alan I. Leshner and Baxter M. Wynn

When Christian clergy across the country took part in a recent "evolution Sunday," South Carolina congregations were well-represented. Similarly, nearly 120 of the state's religious leaders are among some 10,000 who have signed a letter affirming that "the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist."

Yet, proposed changes to South Carolina's biology standards -- to be evaluated Wednesday by the State Board of Education -- would resuscitate an unnecessary and artificial conflict between scientific facts and faith. Bringing this staged conflict back to life would only confuse students about the nature of science, while distorting their understanding of how science relates to religion. Worse still, the alternative language threatens to diminish the very personal nature of religious faith, by suggesting that the rich diversity of beliefs could ever be fairly portrayed as a single viewpoint in a science classroom.

The Education Oversight Committee, advised in part by two scientists representing a leading anti-evolution group, has recommended changing the way that biology is taught to K-12 students. On first blush, the alternative language seems reasonable enough: It proposes that students should "critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory." But, don't be fooled. These same words have become code for those who, like Sen. Mike Fair (R-Greenville), seem determined to insert one -- and only one -- type of religion into science classes. Nationwide, more than a dozen pending laws, including Sen. Fair's South Carolina S 909, would undermine the teaching of evolution by emphasizing "flaws" in the theory, or by calling for more critical thinking, though only regarding evolution.

Such efforts are a disservice to students and to parents of many faiths whose own beliefs may or may not be consistent with "creationism" -- the literal interpretation of Genesis -- or its more recent incarnation, "intelligent design." This is what proponents like Sen. Fair want to have taught.

Advertisement

CLICK HERE & GET THE LATEST POSTER NOW!!

Americans have long valued religious freedom. A subset of U.S. citizens believe that the universe and all its inhabitants were created, literally in their current form, within the past 10,000 years, not billions of years ago as demonstrated by scientific evidence. And, that's fine for this small group of people.

But, the theory of evolution does not, in fact, conflict in any way with the religious views of the vast majority of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist

or Hindu followers. Further, the updated version of Charles Darwin's original proposal that plants and animals evolve and adapt gradually over time is well-supported by thousands of studies and well-accepted by virtually every scientist in the world. Increasingly, mainstream religious leaders have teamed up with scientists to affirm the importance of a high-quality science education, as evidenced by the 10,000-strong Clergy Letter and by public endorsements from the Vatican's

Article tools

- E-mail this story
- Print this story
- Get breaking news, briefings e-mailed to you
- [SUBSCRIBE TO THE GREENVILLE NEWS](#)

More details

Alan I. Leshner is chief executive officer for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the journal Science. Baxter M. Wynn is minister of pastoral care and community relations at First Baptist Church of Greenville.

Related news from the Web

• [USATODAY News, Sports and Entertainment](#)

Sponsored links

Top Jobs
The Greenville News
POWERED BY
careerbuilder®

[Delivery Driver/Warehouse](#)

[YOU CAN PASS THE POSTAL EXAM!](#)

[Faurecia Seating has the following](#)

All Top Jobs

[About Top Jobs](#)

News

305 S. Main St.
PO Box 1688
Greenville, SC
29602

(864) 298-4100
(800) 800-5116

Subscription
services
(800) 736-7136

Newspaper in Educ.
Community
Involvement
Our history
Ethics principles

Send:

A story idea
A press release
A letter to the editor

Find:

A news story
An editor or reporter
An obituary

chief astronomer.

Inserting one religious view into science standards is disrespectful of other faiths. Presenting science alongside religion within the science curriculum also would hinder students' efforts to grasp the nature of science versus faith. That's a shame. As President Bush pointed out in his latest State of the Union Address, at a time when America is facing unprecedented challenges we cannot afford to compromise the quality of K-12 science education. We must do all we can to train the next generation of innovators.

The stakes are especially high in South Carolina, which has established a record of excellence in science education. The state's science standards are widely admired and were even applauded as "exemplary" in a recent Fordham Foundation report.

Creationism and intelligent design may be perfectly appropriate in courses dealing with philosophy, religion, family teachings or world views. But, South Carolina's State Board of Education should stick to teaching science in science classrooms. The state's children deserve the best possible science education, as well as their religious freedom.



RSS Feeds

XML Top Stories,
Breaking News



XML Local News



XML Business



XML Sports



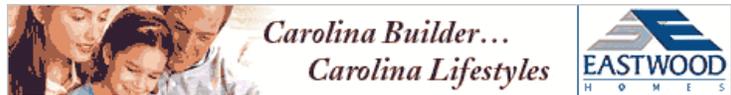
XML Opinion



XML Entertainment



Advertisement



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) • [Cars: Cars.com](#) • [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) • [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)
Customer Service: [Subscribe Now](#) | [Manage your account](#) | [Place an Ad](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#)



Copyright 2005 The Greenville News.
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the
Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, updated
June 7, 2005.

