Joe the Plumber’s vision
a stark contrast to Obama

JONAH GOLDBERG maintains that
millions of Americans don’t share
Barack Obama’s worldview that we need
to "spread the wealth around."

ATTACK on Joe the Plumber!

By ALAN I. LEISNER

T EXAS has earned a reputation as an inno-
vation powerhouse in fields ranging from
agriculture and life sciences to high tech-
nology and space exploration.

But in a report issued this summer, a panel of
Texas business, education and government lead-
ers warned that without "critical changes" in
state schools — especially in science-related in-
struction — the state will lose its global competi-
tive edge.

It appears, however, that some members of
the State Board of Education are working on
a different agenda. Last week, the Appointed
board members action threatens to confuse students,
divide communities and tarnish Texas’ reputa-
tion as an international science and technology
center.

Intelligent design advocates on the state board
have been maneuvering for months to under-
mine the teaching of evolution in science classes.

They say that students need to hear about the
strengths and weaknesses of evolution, which of
course is true. But then they argue that the uni-
verse is so complex that it required an intelligent
designer and that such teaching would be taught
in classes as an alternative to evolution. This is a
religious belief, not a scientific argument. There
is no science base to the notion of an intelligent
designer.

In addition, there is no scientific controversy.
Mainstream science and medical organizations
in the United States and worldwide, representing
tens of millions of scientists, accept evolution as
the best explanation for how life developed on
Earth. Yes, the anti-evolution campaign has lined up
a small number of scientist supporters, but they
have no expertise in biology or education. U.S. courts
have seen through their arguments, repeatedly
calling that creationism and intelligent design are religious ideas that should not be taught as science in public schools.

Does that mean science and religion are inherently at odds? Not at all. They ask different questions and are separate realms of knol-
dge.

Science uses experiments and repeatable ob-
servations to build understanding of the natural
world; it has nothing to say about the supernat-
ural or spiritual realm. What experiment can test
the working of an intelligent creator? What
hard evidence can prove it, or disprove it? This isn’t a scientific issue. It’s a matter of faith.

Certainly many scientis-
tists feel that their work
presents no conflict with
their faith. And nearly
12,000 Christian, reli-
gious leaders, more than
500 of them in Texas,
have signed the Clergy
Letter Project, which sup-
ports evolution and op-
poses intelligent design in
science class.

That consensus doesn’t make headlines,
but it shows us some
constructive common
ground.

Bringing nonscientific ideas into biology classes creates unacceptable risks. It will confuse young students and teach them to distrust well-
established scientific facts. Classes could become religious battlegrounds.

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Board's actions could put
students at a disadvantage

- Anti-evolution push may hurt efforts to teach science

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