

(1) New York Times editorial and major scientific societies call for Jindal's veto of SB 733

(2) Escalating Discovery Institute involvement in promoting SB 733

Baton Rouge, LA, June 22, 2008 — The *New York Times* has noticed the Louisiana legislature's passage of SB 733, the "LA Science Education Act." In its Saturday, June 21, 2008, editorial, "Louisiana's Latest Assault on Darwin," the *Times* urges Gov. Jindal to veto the bill: "The state . . . has a sorry history as a hotbed of creationists' efforts to inject religious views into science courses. All that stands in the way of this retrograde step is Gov. Bobby Jindal." (See http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/21/opinion/21sat4.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin) With one of the nation's most prestigious newspapers highlighting the legislature's support for this misguided legislation, the eyes of the nation will now be turned toward our state even more attentively.

Louisiana's passage of SB 733 has also come to the attention of well-known *National Review* columnist John Derbyshire, who calls upon Gov. Jindal to either veto the bill or "explain to Louisiana taxpayers the pointless waste of public money that will inevitably ensue from your signing it." (See June 20, 2008, "Governor Jindal, Veto This Bill!" at <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=YjM2ODY1N2E1NGZkYTJjNDEyYWMyMWQzYTQzYWYxODU>)

In addition, nine of the nation's most prestigious scientific societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), have sent letters to Gov. Jindal asking him to veto the bill. (See <http://lasciencecoalition.org/2008/06/22/scientific-societies-call-for-veto/>)

As the calls for Gov. Jindal to veto SB 733 grow louder, evidence of the escalating involvement in Louisiana of the Discovery Institute (DI), the out-of-state creationist think tank whose religious agenda was declared unconstitutional in *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District* (2005), continues to accumulate. Given DI's emergence as a major player and partner with the LA Family Forum in promoting SB 733, Gov. Jindal's allowing the bill to become law is likely to attract even more unflattering national attention. The LA Coalition for Science repeats its request that Gov. Jindal veto the bill in order to spare Louisiana this embarrassment.

The governor must understand that our state, in which educators in our elementary and secondary schools as well as in the state's universities work so hard to improve the quality of life, is being targeted by the Discovery Institute, working through the LA Family Forum. The evidence of DI's meddling in Louisiana is clear and damaging:

- The Discovery Institute is now presuming to interpret what SB 733 means for Louisiana education. (See http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/06/questions_and_answers_about_th.html) John West, associate director of DI's creationist Center for Science and Culture, states that the bill is needed because "science teachers are being harassed, intimidated, and sometimes fired for trying to present scientific evidence critical of Darwinian theory along with the evidence that supports it. Second, many school administrators and teachers are fearful or confused about what is legally allowed when teaching about controversial scientific issues like evolution." Yet there is no evidence that any of these things have happened in Louisiana.
- Casey Luskin, former student ID follower and now DI employee, accompanied Virginia creationist and ID supporter, Dr. Caroline Crocker, to Baton Rouge when she testified in favor of SB 733 before the House Education Committee on May 21. Luskin began podcasting about DI's intrusion into Louisiana affairs even before he left the state:
 1. "Dr. Caroline Crocker on Academic Freedom and Dissent from Darwinism" (recorded in Baton Rouge): http://www.idthefuture.com/2008/05/dr_caroline_crocker_on_academi.html.
Direct link to mp3: <http://www.switchpod.com/users/discovery/IDTFEpisodeCarolineCrocker.mp3>
 2. "Testifying for Academic Freedom in Louisiana" (Luskin's "reflective account" on House Education Committee hearing): http://www.idthefuture.com/2008/05/testifying_for_academic_freedo.html
Direct link to audio: http://intelligentdesign.podomatic.com/player/web/2008-05-30T14_08_08-07_00

3. “Testifying Against Academic Freedom in Louisiana” (Luskin criticizing as false the testimony of Barbara Forrest, 27-year LA educator): http://www.idthefuture.com/2008/06/testifying_against_academic_fr.html
Direct link to audio: http://intelligentdesign.podomatic.com/player/web/2008-06-02T15_43_38-07_00

- As they have done in the case of other states where they played a leading role in attacking the teaching of evolution (e.g., Kansas, Georgia, Ohio, and Texas), DI has set up a special web page with “Links to information about the Louisiana Science Education Act.” See http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/06/links_to_information_about_the.html. See their websites about other states into whose educational affairs they have intruded:

1. Kansas: <http://www.discovery.org/a/2544>
2. Ohio: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3180>
3. Cobb County, Georgia: <http://www.discovery.org/a/2290>
4. Texas: <http://www.discovery.org/csc/texas/>

See the entire list of DI’s “State Specific Resources,” to which they will no doubt soon add Louisiana: <http://www.discovery.org/a/2106>.

- DI senior fellow and legal advisor, Gonzaga University law professor David K. DeWolf (torts and consumer law, not constitutional law), has reveal that he helped craft SB 733 in accordance with DI’s model academic freedom act. DI coordinated the introduction of such legislation, in various forms, in six states this year, including Louisiana. DI staffer Rob Crowther interviewed DeWolf about the LA bill: http://www.idthefuture.com/2008/06/david_dewolf_on_the_louisiana.html.
Direct link to audio: http://intelligentdesign.podomatic.com/enclosure/2008-06-13T15_24_01-07_00.mp3

In this podcast, Crowther states that SB 733 “is modeled after the evolution academic freedom bills, after the ones that we put online and recommended.” Addressing DeWolf, Crowther says, in reference to SB 733, “And now, here’s a bill that we’ve [the Discovery Institute] been recommending, and which I believe that you had a hand in developing, coming to fruition.” DeWolf responds, “Yes, certainly some of the early drafting. And the idea was kicking around in a lot of different places. Certainly, the idea wasn’t original to us, but in terms of shaping the bill and making it fit more of the educational context, we certainly wanted to do that.”

See evidence of DeWolf and DI’s involvement in similar legislation in Alabama in 2004: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2044>

- The ID movement’s leading intellectual, William Dembski, who defends ID when talking to the media but refused to defend it in court in the *Kitzmiller* case, has now issued his own call for ID supporters to contact Gov. Jindal in support of SB 733, thus escalating DI’s public stake in the future of the bill.
(See <http://www.uncommondescent.com/education/pressure-on-gov-jindal-to-supportdeny-academic-freedom/>)

These are only a few examples of DI’s escalating interference in the education of Louisiana children.

Public schools are the state’s best hope of putting a better life within reach of every Louisiana child. The LA Coalition for Science repeats our call for Gov. Jindal to help us protect the schools and the children by vetoing SB 733 outright. By doing so, he will affirm the importance of public education in Louisiana, thereby earning the gratitude of our teachers and students, as well as the respect of the nation.

Louisiana Coalition for Science is a grassroots group working to protect the teaching of science in Louisiana. On the web at <http://lasciencecoalition.org>.

Contacts:

Barbara Forrest / barbara.forrest@gmail.com / 985-974-4244

Patsye Peebles / patsye.peebles@gmail.com / 225-936-6074