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Member, Senate Education Committee
Member, Education Oversight Committee

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For Immediate Release: **Statement regarding South Carolina Biology Standards**

The Education Oversight Committee has today concurred with the revised High School Biology Standards passed earlier this month by the State Board of Education which include the much discussed, “critical analysis” component to our state standards. This is a positive move toward good science education. Critical analysis is foundational to high quality science and is a key component to higher order thinking skills that students must possess to succeed in their post educational endeavors. The Standard B-5 for S.C. High School Biology states, “The student will demonstrate an understanding of biological evolution and the diversity of life.” Indicator B-5.6 listed under that standard states that, the students will, “Summarize ways that scientists use data from a variety of sources to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory.”

It is impossible to meet this standard without the discussion of the meaning of critical analysis as it applies to evolutionary science. This is a great improvement over our 2000 standards. Students will now have the opportunity to wholly learn about the theory of evolution. This means that students will have the opportunity to fully discuss all aspects of evolutionary theory instead of limiting discussion to only evidence that might support it. Critical analysis along with other higher order thinking skills such as observation, evaluation and explanation enables students to analyze both the scientific strengths and weaknesses of evolutionary theory and is foundational to the science discipline. South Carolina recognizes the need for critical analysis in a thorough discussion of any aspect of the science discipline. Students will excel in this core subject area having acquired a comprehensive set of skills to adequately compete in the field of science.