

**Model Academic Freedom Bill:**

**AN ACT PROTECTING TEACHER ACADEMIC FREEDOM TO TEACH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE REGARDING CONTROVERSIAL SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS**

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ State Legislature understands that an important purpose of science education is to inform students about scientific evidence and to help students develop critical thinking skills they need in order to become intelligent, productive, and scientifically informed citizens. The Legislature further understands that the teaching of some scientific subjects, such as biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning, can cause controversy, and that some teachers may be unsure of the expectations concerning how they should present information on such subjects.

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education, public elementary and secondary school governing authorities, superintendents of schools, school system administrators, and public elementary and secondary school principals and administrators shall endeavor to create an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that encourages students to explore scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills, and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues. Such educational authorities in \_\_\_\_\_ shall also endeavor to assist teachers to find more effective ways to present the science curriculum where it addresses scientific controversies. Toward this end, teachers shall be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course being taught.

C. Neither the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education, nor any public elementary or secondary school governing authority, superintendent of schools, or school system administrator, nor any public elementary or secondary school principal or administrator shall prohibit any teacher in a public school system of this state from helping students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course being taught.

D. This Act only protects the teaching of scientific information, and this Act shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion.

E. This Act only protects discussion of the scientific strengths and weaknesses of topics that are already part of the required science curriculum and is not intended to authorize a teacher to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of new topics that are not already part of the required science curriculum.

F. By no later than the start of the 2015-2016 school term, the \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Education shall notify all public school system superintendents of the

provisions of this Act. Each superintendent shall then disseminate to all employees within his or her school system a copy of the provisions of this Act.