



Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology and CU Teach

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Honorable Bobby Jindal
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: Veto of SB 733

Dear Governor Jindal:

SB 733, recently passed by both houses of the Louisiana State legislature, purports to permit teachers to help students “develop critical thinking skills, and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues.” This is a seemingly noble-sounding but deceptive goal. If carried out honestly, it would open the door to a critical analysis of a wide range of religious beliefs within the context of the science classroom, as well as promoting a dishonest view of evolutionary biology in particular and modern science in general.

As you probably know, science is all about critical thinking, but it is critical thinking constrained by objective data and rigorous logic. Having taught many undergraduates here in Colorado, the foundations of modern biology and through my involvement in our university's science and mathematic teacher certification program (CU Teach – funded in part through a grant from the National Mathematics and Science Institute, backed in large measure by funds from Exxon-Mobil), I speak from some degree of experience that once students understand biology's experimental and theoretical foundations, they appreciate the central role of evolutionary theory - moreover they see religiously motivated attacks on how biology is taught for what they are, pressure politics by special interests, unconcerned about the quality of their (the student's) education.

I am sure you will receive a number of letters along this line, but I would make a different point, relating to the separation of church and state. If you countenance what is a dishonest attempt to sneak a religious position into the science classroom, you invite a scientific critique of religious assumptions, something that I doubt that you or the bill's sponsors/supporters intend.

I call upon you to veto SB 733 in the best interests of your citizens, both religious and secular.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Klymkowsky', written over a horizontal line.

Michael Klymkowsky
Professor, MCD-Biology
Co-Director, CU Teach