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Call 2012 the Year of the Copycat. Many of the antievolution bills proposed this year were old bills that were simply dusted off and offered up as new.

A 2011 Tennessee bill—largely drawn from Louisiana's infamous 2008 Science Education Act—was revived and signed into law in April. Among other things, this classic "academic freedom" bill lets teachers "help" students critique evolution, global warming, and more. This means there are now two states in the Union—Louisiana and Tennessee—that have anti-evolution and anti-climate change education laws on the books.

Another classic "academic freedom" bill that nearly passed was Oklahoma's HB 1551, which trotted out classic creationist "teach the strengths and weakness" wording. (For more on academic freedom acts, go [here](#). [4])

Other bills, such as Missouri's HB 1227, tried to shoehorn creationism into the classroom by mucking with state science standards. And like last year, several bills attacked both evolution and climate change education. (See [Why is NCSE Now Concerned with Climate Change?](#) [5].

Given all the proposed legislation this year—9 bills in all—we thought a short guide would be helpful.

Tennessee

Senate Bill 893 (SB 893)

Aim: "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"...including evolution, global warming, the chemical origin of life, and human cloning.

Status: Passed, signed into law.

House Bill 368 (HB 368)

Aim: Identical to SB 893

Status: Passed, signed into law

Links:

["Monkey bill" enacted in Tennessee](#) [6]

[What next in Tennessee?](#) [7]

Oklahoma

HB 1551

Aim: Allows teachers and students to "analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning". Students will not be penalized if they "subscribe to a particular position on scientific theories."

Another Academic "Freedom" Act.

Status: Passed by House; died in Senate education committee.

SB 1742

Aim: Similar to HB 1551. Modeled on the 2008 Louisiana Science Education Act. Bill would create "an environment within the public school system that promotes critical thinking, logical analysis, open and objective discussion of scientific theories including, but not limited to, evolution, the origin of life, global warming, and human cloning". An Academic "Freedom" Act.

Status: Died in education committee.

Links:

[Oklahoma okay at last](#) [8]

Missouri

HB 1276

Aim: "...teachers shall be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of the theory of biological [sic] and hypotheses of chemical evolution". An Academic "Freedom" Act.

Status: Died in committee

HB 1227

Aim: "If a scientific theory concerning biological origin is taught...biological intelligent design shall be taught". Targeted at K-12 and public universities(!), the bill would allow schools to teach "various theories concerning the origin of life, including creation science".

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[Antievolution legislation dies in Missouri](#) [9]

Indiana

SB 89

Aim: Would allow local school districts to "require the teaching of various theories concerning the origin of life, including creation science."

Status: Passed in Senate, died in the House

Links:

[Indiana creationist bill passes committee](#) [10]

[Creationist bill in Indiana shelved](#) [11]

New Hampshire

HB 1148

Aim: Would "[r]equire evolution to be taught in the public schools of this state as a theory, including the theorists' political and ideological viewpoints and their position on the concept of atheism."

Status: Died in committee

HB 1457

Aim: Would "[r]equire science teachers to instruct pupils that proper scientific inquire [sic] results from not committing to any one theory or hypothesis, no matter how firmly it appears to be established, and that scientific and technological innovations based on new evidence can challenge accepted scientific theories or modes." Original draft of bill required "instruction in intelligent design in the public schools."

Status: Died in committee

Links:

[New Hampshire antievolution bills dismissed](#) [12]

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The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a not-for-profit membership organization that defends the teaching of evolution and climate science in the public schools. The NCSE provides information, resources, and advice to schools, teachers, parents, and concerned citizens defending science education. We educate the press and public about the scientific, educational, and legal aspects of these issues at local, state, and national levels. Our 4500 members are scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious and political affiliations.

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