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With the addition of Steve Trigwell on September 12, 2005, NCSE's Project Steve attained its 600th signatory. A tongue-in-cheek parody of a long-standing creationist tradition of amassing lists of "scientists who doubt evolution" or "scientists who dissent from Darwinism," Project Steve mocks such lists by restricting its signatories to scientists whose first name is Steve (or a cognate, such as Stephanie, Esteban, or Stefano). About 1% of the United States population possesses such a first name, so each signatory represents about 100 potential signatories. ("Steve" was selected in honor of the late Stephen Jay Gould, a Supporter of NCSE and a dauntless defender of evolution education.)

Although the idea of Project Steve is frivolous, the [statement](#) [4] is serious. It reads, "Evolution is a vital, well-supported, unifying principle of the biological sciences, and the scientific evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the idea that all living things share a common ancestry. Although there are legitimate debates about the patterns and processes of evolution, there is no serious scientific doubt that evolution occurred or that natural selection is a major mechanism in its occurrence. It is scientifically inappropriate and pedagogically irresponsible for creationist pseudoscience, including but not limited to 'intelligent design,' to be introduced into the science curricula of our nation's public schools."

Steve #600 joined just in time for Project Steve to be mentioned in Andrew O'Hehir's glowing [review](#) [5] of Chris Mooney's [The Republican War on Science](#) [6] (Basic Books, 2005) in the on-line journal Salon.com (September 14, 2005). After describing the Discovery Institute's list of scientists who "dissent from Darwinism," O'Hehir wrote: "This list has become Exhibit A in the argument that genuine scientific controversy exists over evolution, and to the layperson it certainly looked impressive. Bush and Santorum are not likely, however, to mention the National Center for Science Education's hilarious response. The NCSE began gathering names of scientists who agreed that evolution was 'a vital, well-supported, unifying principle of the biological sciences' -- but restricted membership to those whose

names were Steve, Stephanie or some other variation of Stephen."

Thanks in part to the reference in Salon.com, there was a sudden wave of scientists named Steve interested in signing the Project Steve statement, and as of today, September 16, 2005, the Steveometer is at 615. Meanwhile, the Discovery Institute's roster of scientists who "dissent from Darwinism" is shorter by one. Bob Davidson is a doctor and a retired professor of nephrology at the University of Washington's medical school; he is also a devout Christian who was attracted to the Discovery Institute's purported embrace of both science and religion and who agreed to be listed. But now, he [told](#) [7] the *Seattle Times*'s columnist Danny Westneat (August 24, 2005), "I'm kind of embarrassed that I ever got involved with this."

"When I joined I didn't think they were about bashing evolution," Davidson said. But he was shocked when he realized that the Discovery Institute was calling evolution "a theory in crisis," according to the *Times*. "It's laughable: There have been millions of experiments over more than a century that support evolution," he said. "There's always questions being asked about parts of the theory, as there are with any theory, but there's no real scientific controversy about it." Finally, Davidson said, "It just clicked with me that this whole movement is wrongheaded on all counts."

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