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In the wake of a recommendation to approve new high school biology textbooks despite the ongoing complaints about their presentation of evolution, columnists and editorialists in Louisiana are both rejoicing and calling on the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to heed the recommendation. As NCSE previously [reported](#) [4], the board's Textbook/Media/Library Advisory Council voted 8-4 to recommend the textbooks on November 12, 2010; the board is expected to make its decision on the textbooks during its December 7-9, 2010, meeting.

Writing in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* (November 17, 2010), columnist James Gill [commented](#) [5], "It no longer makes sense to suggest the creationists are making a laughing stock out of Louisiana. ... the crusade against science and reason suffered a rare defeat. Biology textbooks in public schools will not be required to serve up evolution with a dollop of religion." He added, "This is a historic moment. When the loonies on a state committee are outnumbered two to one, the future has never looked so bright."

Gill warned, however, that "[t]he final decision rests with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, where the Louisiana Family Forum and other creationist stalwarts have always found a sympathetic ear," [recalling](#) [6] the incident in 2009 when BESE overruled the recommendation of the state's department of education and in effect allowed the LFF to dictate the procedures concerning complaints about creationist supplementary materials used in public school science classes under the so-called Louisiana Science Education Act.

In its November 18, 2010, editorial, the *Baton Rouge Advocate* strongly criticized the Louisiana Science Education Act, which was invoked by critics of the textbooks. "What is the spirit of the 'Science Education Act' in reality?" the editorial [asked](#) [7] rhetorically. "It is to challenge evolution, not simply protect intellectual freedom of teachers who want to 'question' evolution's 'weaknesses.' Forgive the overuse of quotation marks, but every assertion of creationists in this debate is so fraudulent that the quote marks

are necessary."

The editorial continued, "Any reputable science text should teach evolution, as that is one of the fundamentals of biological science. The fraud behind the 'Science Education Act' is that it was called a measure narrowly designed to deal with a specific problem. Rather, it is part of an anti-intellectual crusade that can serve only to hobble the education of Louisiana's children, and will have the effect of bringing ridicule on this state," and concluded by calling upon BESE to stand firm "against this campaign of ignorance."

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