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One of the two bills aimed at empowering taxpayers to object to the use of specific instructional materials in the public schools — whose supporters have evolution and climate change in their sights — progressed further in the Florida legislature.

[House Bill 989](#) [4] passed the House Education Committee on a 16-2 vote on April 6, 2017. Its counterpart, [Senate Bill 1210](#) [5], having passed the Senate Education Committee on March 27, 2017, is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

As introduced, HB 989 and SB 1210 would have allowed any Florida taxpayer — rather than only local parents — to complain about instructional materials, and would have rescinded the finality of the local school board's decision on such complaints.

As amended in their various committees, however, both bills now would allow only local parents or county residents to file complaints and provide, "The school board's decision after convening a hearing is final and not subject to further petition and review."

But passage of the bills even as amended would threaten to inundate local school boards with scientifically unfounded attacks on climate change and evolution, as Brandon Haught of Florida Citizens for Science [emphasized](#) [6] in a March 27, 2017, blog post.

To demonstrate his point, Haught cited affidavits submitted in support of the bills that complained, e.g., "I have witnessed students being taught evolution as a fact ... rather than a theory ... I have witnessed children being taught that Global Warming is a reality."

Opposition to HB 989 also came from the National Coalition Against Censorship, which [warned](#) [7] (PDF) the House Education Committee, "The bill threatens to undermine the quality of education in Florida by potentially inviting and facilitating wasteful, expensive, and viewpoint-based challenges."

Reacting to HB 989's passage in a subsequent blog post (April 6, 2017), Haught [lamented](#) [8], "The nightmare is getting closer and closer to becoming a reality" even despite the "mountains of evidence" available about the intended use and abuse of the bills.

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