

# **Florida Academy of Sciences, Inc.**

---

777 East Princeton Street • Orlando, Florida 32803



20 March 2009

**A Position Statement from the Florida Academy of Sciences\*  
on Florida Senate Bill 2396:  
“An act relating to educational instruction; amending s. 1003.42, F.S.”**

Since 1936, the Florida Academy of Sciences has represented professionals in all disciplines of science and has worked to promote scientific research and foster public and governmental understanding of science in the state of Florida. The Academy strongly supports the Florida State Science Standards for K–12 adopted in 2008, which emphasizes the importance of the scientific theory of evolution as the unifying concept in the biological sciences, and the Public Education K–12 required instruction as currently written in the Florida Statutes (s. 1003.42 F.S.).

The Academy further sees the currently proposed SB 2396 to mandate “critical analysis” of the theory of evolution in the required instruction statutes as a deliberate attempt to undermine the adopted science standards. The wording of this bill is similar to many introduced across the country at the behest of the Discovery Institute, a Seattle-based organization that explicitly promotes the teaching of scientific creationism (now packaged as “Intelligent Design”) in the public schools. Similar Discovery Institute-backed legislation has already been declared unconstitutional in several other states, including the well-known *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District* case (2005) in Pennsylvania. In the wake of the *Kitzmiller* ruling, the latest tactic of creationists has been to promote educational policies that propose “critical analysis” and similar invocations of critical thinking—specifically in connection with evolution-related science. The arguments underpinning these critical analysis policies are traceable to the primary texts of the Intelligent Design and creation science movements.

SB 2396, in effect, leaves the door open for the introduction in the public school curriculum of nonscientific and covertly religious doctrines. The proposed bill would be damaging to the quality of science education of Florida’s children and the scientific literacy of our citizens. It would further undermine the reputation of our state and adversely affect our economic future as we try to attract new high-tech and biomedical jobs to Florida.

Therefore, the Florida Academy of Sciences opposes Florida Senate Bill 2396 in the strongest terms possible. We urge the Senate to reject this proposed legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Turner, President

\*Approved by the Council of the Florida Academy of Sciences at its quarterly meeting on 19 March 2009, and by the Florida Academy of Sciences, Inc., at the annual business meeting of its members on 20 March 2009