

HB 486 -- TEACHING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE REGARDING EVOLUTION

SPONSOR: Koenig

This bill requires the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, public elementary and secondary school governing authorities, and school administrative entities to create a school environment that encourages students to explore scientific questions; learn about scientific evidence; develop critical thinking skills; respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues, including biological and chemical evolution; and to assist teachers in finding effective ways to present controversial scientific material. These entities must allow any teacher to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of the theory of biological and hypotheses of chemical evolution. The provisions of the bill must not be construed as promoting any doctrine or discriminating for or against any belief or promoting discrimination for or against theistic or nontheistic religion. The department must notify all superintendents of the provisions of the bill by the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, and each superintendent must distribute a copy of these provisions to all school employees within his or her school system.