

the First Amendment requirement for government neutrality with respect to religion, since evolution is the basis of nontheistic religions such as secular humanism.

5. The laws do not consider *age-appropriateness*. Most science curricula start dealing with controversial issues in middle school. Students need maturity and a good background in basic science before debating such issues. Thus, coverage of scientific controversies should be delayed until high school.

6. The laws do not list any *weak-*

nesses of evolution (or other theories). Mainline scientists/educators claim that evolution is so well established that there are no weaknesses. In fact, there is abundant evidence that suggests biological evolution cannot stand on its own. For example: (a) the chemical origin of life remains an unsolved mystery; (b) intelligence was needed to form the genetic code; (c) biological information and complexity cannot be explained by material causes; (d) the fossil record is inconsistent with macroevolution;

(e) random mutations, a key factor in neo-Darwinian theory, are almost always harmful to the organism; and (f) material causes cannot explain non-material entities (*e.g.*, the mind, consciousness, thoughts and memories). Science should follow the evidence.

Academic freedom laws for K-12 schools may be helpful in some circumstances to insert more objectivity in the teaching of controversial issues in science. These laws are not a long-term solution to the problem of embedded materialism in science education. 

DEFUND THE DEPARTMENT THAT DOES NOT EDUCATE

by Congressman Thomas Massie, representing Kentucky's 4th District.

On February 7, 2017 Representative Thomas Massie (R-KY) introduced H.R. 899, a bill to abolish the federal Department of Education. The bill, which is one sentence long, states, “The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2018.”

On the day of Betsy DeVos’ scheduled Senate confirmation for Secretary of Education, Massie said, “Neither Congress nor the President, through his appointees, has the constitutional authority to dictate how and what our children must learn.”

Massie added, “Unelected bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. should not be in charge of our children’s intellectual and moral development. States and local communities are best positioned to shape curricula that meet the needs of their students. Schools should be accountable. Parents have the right to choose the most appropriate educational opportunity for their children, including home school, public school, or private school.”

“For years, I have advocated returning education policy to where it belongs — the state and local level,” said Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), an original co-sponsor. “D.C. bureaucrats cannot begin to understand the needs of schools and its students on an indi-

vidual basis. It is time that we get the Feds out of the classroom, and terminate the Department of Education.”

“I’ve always been a proponent of empowering parents, teachers and local school boards who best know our children and their needs,” said Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID), another original co-sponsor. “Eliminating the U.S. Department of Education is the most important step we in Congress can take in returning decision making to the local level.”

“Education of our students should lie primarily with parents, teachers, and state and local officials who know how to meet their individual needs best,” said Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ). “Since its inception, the Department of Education has grown into an unrecognizable federal beast, and its policies have helped foster Common Core across the country. It is time the one-size-fits-all approach by the federal government is ended and authority is returned to the local level.”

The Department of Education began operating in 1980. On September 24, 1981 in his Address to the Nation on the Program for Economic Recovery, President Ronald Reagan said, “As a third step, we propose to dismantle two Cabinet Departments, Energy and Education. Both Secretaries are wholly

in accord with this. Some of the activities in both of these departments will, of course, be continued either independently or in other areas of government. There’s

only one way to shrink the size and cost of big government, and that is by eliminating agencies that are not needed and are getting in the way of a solution. . . . Education is the principal responsibility of local school systems, teachers, parents, citizen boards, and State governments. By eliminating the Department of Education less than 2 years after it was created, we cannot only reduce the budget but ensure that local needs and preferences, rather than the wishes of Washington, determine the education of our children.” 

