

# SENATE BILL No. 1361

June 3, 2008, Introduced by Senators HARDIMAN, GARCIA, JANSEN, CROPSEY and KUIPERS and referred to the Committee on Education.

A bill to amend 1976 PA 451, entitled  
"The revised school code,"  
(MCL 380.1 to 380.1852) by adding section 1292.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1           SEC. 1292. (1) THE LEGISLATURE UNDERSTANDS THAT AN IMPORTANT  
2 PURPOSE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IS TO INFORM STUDENTS ABOUT SCIENTIFIC  
3 EVIDENCE AND TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS THEY  
4 NEED IN ORDER TO BECOME INTELLIGENT, PRODUCTIVE, AND SCIENTIFICALLY  
5 INFORMED CITIZENS. THE LEGISLATURE FURTHER UNDERSTANDS THAT THE  
6 TEACHING OF SOME SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS, SUCH AS BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION,  
7 THE CHEMICAL ORIGINS OF LIFE, HUMAN IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND  
8 HUMAN CLONING, CAN CAUSE CONTROVERSY AND THAT SOME TEACHERS MAY BE  
9 UNSURE OF THE EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING HOW THEY SHOULD PRESENT  
10 INFORMATION ON SUCH SUBJECTS. THIS SECTION IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE

1 CLARIFICATION IN THESE MATTERS.

2 (2) THE STATE BOARD, THE BOARD OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR  
3 INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF A PUBLIC  
4 SCHOOL ACADEMY, A LOCAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,  
5 AND ANY OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFICIAL OR ADMINISTRATOR SHALL  
6 ENDEAVOR TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WITHIN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND  
7 SECONDARY SCHOOLS THAT ENCOURAGES PUPILS TO EXPLORE SCIENTIFIC  
8 QUESTIONS, LEARN ABOUT SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE, DEVELOP CRITICAL  
9 THINKING SKILLS, AND RESPOND APPROPRIATELY AND RESPECTFULLY TO  
10 DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. THESE  
11 EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES ALSO SHALL ENDEAVOR TO ASSIST TEACHERS TO  
12 FIND MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PRESENT THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM IN  
13 INSTANCES WHERE THAT CURRICULUM ADDRESSES SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSIES.  
14 TOWARD THIS END, THESE EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES SHALL ALLOW TEACHERS  
15 TO HELP PUPILS UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, CRITIQUE, AND REVIEW IN AN  
16 OBJECTIVE MANNER THE SCIENTIFIC STRENGTHS AND SCIENTIFIC WEAKNESSES  
17 OF EXISTING SCIENTIFIC THEORIES PERTINENT TO THE COURSE BEING  
18 TAUGHT.

19 (3) THE STATE BOARD, THE BOARD OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR  
20 INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF A PUBLIC  
21 SCHOOL ACADEMY, A LOCAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,  
22 OR ANY OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFICIAL OR ADMINISTRATOR SHALL NOT  
23 PROHIBIT ANY TEACHER IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THIS STATE FROM HELPING  
24 A PUPIL TO UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, CRITIQUE, AND REVIEW IN AN  
25 OBJECTIVE MANNER THE SCIENTIFIC STRENGTHS AND SCIENTIFIC WEAKNESSES  
26 OF EXISTING SCIENTIFIC THEORIES PERTINENT TO THE COURSE BEING  
27 TAUGHT.

1           (4) THIS SECTION ONLY PROTECTS THE TEACHING OF SCIENTIFIC  
2 INFORMATION, AND THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED TO PROMOTE ANY  
3 RELIGIOUS OR NONRELIGIOUS DOCTRINE, PROMOTE DISCRIMINATION FOR OR  
4 AGAINST A PARTICULAR SET OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OR NONBELIEFS, OR  
5 PROMOTE DISCRIMINATION FOR OR AGAINST RELIGION OR NONRELIGION.

6           (5) NOT LATER THAN THE START OF THE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR, THE  
7 DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE SUPERINTENDENT OR OTHER CHIEF  
8 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL OF EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT, INTERMEDIATE  
9 SCHOOL DISTRICT, PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY, OR OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL  
10 ABOUT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION. EACH OF THESE SCHOOL  
11 OFFICIALS SHALL THEN DISSEMINATE TO ALL EMPLOYEES WITHIN HIS OR HER  
12 SCHOOL OR SCHOOL SYSTEM A COPY OF THIS SECTION.

13           (6) THIS SECTION SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE "ACADEMIC FREEDOM LAW".