

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in terms and courses of study,
6 providing for teaching of scientific subjects in elementary
7 and secondary schools.

8 The General Assembly finds that:

9 (1) An important purpose of science education is to
10 inform students about scientific evidence and to help
11 students develop critical thinking skills necessary to
12 becoming intelligent, productive and scientifically informed
13 citizens.

14 (2) The teaching of some scientific subjects, including,
15 but not limited to, biological evolution, the chemical
16 origins of life, global warming and human cloning, can cause
17 controversy.

18 (3) Some teachers may be unsure of the expectations
19 concerning how they should present information on such
20 subjects.

1 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
2 hereby enacts as follows:

3 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
4 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
5 section to read:

6 Section 1526. Teaching of Scientific Subjects in Elementary
7 and Secondary Schools.-- (a) The State Board of Education, the
8 board of directors of school districts, public school system
9 administrators and public elementary and secondary school
10 principals and administrators:

11 (1) Shall promote an environment within public elementary
12 and secondary schools that encourages students to explore
13 scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop
14 critical thinking skills and respond appropriately and
15 respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial
16 issues.

17 (2) Shall assist teachers to find effective ways to present
18 the science curriculum as it addresses scientific controversies
19 and shall permit teachers to help students understand, analyze,
20 critique and review in an objective manner the scientific
21 strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific
22 theories covered in the course being taught.

23 (3) May not prohibit any teacher in a school district from
24 helping students understand, analyze, critique and review in an
25 objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific
26 weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course
27 being taught.

28 (b) This section shall be construed to only protect the
29 teaching of scientific information. Nothing in this section
30 shall be construed to promote any religious or nonreligious

1 doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set
2 of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs or promote discrimination for
3 or against religion or nonbelief.
4 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.