

THE MODERATE VOICE

Zack Kopplin
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Activists Re-Launch Campaign to Repeal Louisiana's Creationism Law

Since 2008, the Louisiana Science Education Act Has Been the Subject of National and International Criticism and Ridicule

Baton Rouge, LA — (March, 18, 2013) — Senator Karen Carter Peterson (D-New Orleans) recently filed [SB 26](#) to repeal the Louisiana Science Education Act, Louisiana's misnamed and misguided creationism law.

Since its passage in 2008, the Louisiana Science Education Act (LSEA) has been the subject of national and international criticism and ridicule, and its repeal has been endorsed an overwhelming consensus of scientists and educators and a broad coalition of religious leaders and clergy. This is the Senator Peterson's third attempt at repealing the act.

Previous hearings about the Louisiana Science Education Act were the focus of intense national interest. [Videos](#) of the meetings have collectively received more than 680,000 views on YouTube and were covered by national publications including [io9](#) and [Slate](#). The campaign has been covered both nationally and internationally, including in The Guardian, The Boston Globe, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, Italian Vogue, MSNBC, and Bill Moyers's "Moyers and Company."

Originally conceived as the Louisiana Academic Freedom Act, the LSEA is based on a model statute developed by the Discovery Institute, a Seattle-based think tank that lobbies for legislation promoting creationism in the classroom.

State Senator Ben Nevers, the bill's original sponsor, [explained](#) that he filed the bill at the behest of the Louisiana Family Forum. "They (the Louisiana Family Forum) believe that scientific data related to creationism should be discussed when dealing with Darwin's theory," Senator Nevers said.

Nobel laureate chemist Sir Harry Kroto [said](#), "The present situation (the LSEA) should be likened to requiring Louisiana school texts to include the claim that the sun goes round the Earth."

Three years ago, Sir Harry Kroto was the first Nobel laureate to publicly [endorse](#) the act's repeal. Today, the repeal campaign is endorsed by 78 Nobel laureate scientists, nearly 40% of living Nobel laureate scientists, and numerous other prominent scientists. It has also been endorsed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and other major science and educator organizations in Louisiana and the United States.

In addition, thousands of clergy members, who are part of the Clergy Letter Project, have joined the repeal campaign. Reverend Welton Gaddy, President of the Interfaith Alliance, [said](#), “(The repeal effort) represents the best thinking in American science, the best thinking in American religion, and it also reflects the United States Constitution.”

Over 70,000 people from Louisiana and around the country have signed a [Change.org petition](#) and other petitions in support of this repeal.

The conservative Thomas Fordham Institute [stated](#) the Louisiana Science Education Act creates “anti-evolution pressures (that) continue to threaten state science standards.” In its evaluation of Louisiana’s education system, the Thomas Fordham Institute called the LSEA a “devastating flaw.”

Zack Kopplin, the student who began the campaign against the law said:

“America needs a scientific revolution; a [Second Giant Leap for Humankind](#). Fighting for a repeal of Louisiana’s creationism law is ground zero of this revolution.

“We need a grassroots movement of students who stand up and demand their public officials to support evidence-based science.”

Supporters of the repeal believe they will see a breakthrough this year because Louisiana’s public officials are becoming increasingly pro-science. This spring, the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology [lifted a boycott of New Orleans](#) (a boycott still remains on the rest of Louisiana), which had begun after the passage of the Louisiana Science Education Act. The boycott was lifted after the [New Orleans City Council voted](#) unanimously to support the repeal of Louisiana’s creationism law, and the Orleans Parish School Board [banned creationism](#) from their classrooms in reaction to the passage of this law..

The bill to repeal the Louisiana Science Education Act in 2012 was defeated in committee, by a vote of 2-1.

“We believe that this spring we can muster the votes we need to pass,” Kopplin said.

Read more at <http://themoderatevoice.com/179197/activists-re-launch-campaign-to-repeal-louisianas-creationism-law-guest-voice/#JKQfJjoSGdgJthuo.99>