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TOLERANCE NOW A ONE-WAY STREET?

BY KAREN MCKAY, A RETIRED U.S. ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL LIVING IN NORTH CAROLINA

ABCNEWS.COM, REPORTING ON THE RECENT WHITE HOUSE RAMADAN DINNER FOR MUSLIM LEADERS, QUOTED PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: “AS A CITIZEN, AND AS PRESIDENT, I BELIEVE THAT MUSLIMS HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION AS ANYONE ELSE IN THIS COUNTRY. THAT INCLUDES THE RIGHT TO BUILD A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND A COMMUNITY CENTER ON PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LOWER MANHATTAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES. THIS IS AMERICA, AND OUR COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MUST BE UNSHAKABLE.”

BUT A GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH AT GROUND ZERO THAT WAS DESTROYED ON 9/11 HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO REBUILD.

(KAREN, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE US THE REASON WHY THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO REBUILD? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?)

CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PRAY ON THE STEPS OF THE SUPREME COURT.

(KAREN, THAT IS A LIE. ANYONE CAN PRAY, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE. PLEASE QUOTE THE LAW THAT FORBIDS CHILDREN FROM PRAYING ON THE STEPS OF THE SUPREME COURT. YOU CAN'T, BECAUSE THERE IS NO SUCH LAW).

VALEDICTORIANS ARE FORBIDDEN TO THANK GOD.

(KAREN, BY WHOM? THEY CAN THANK GOD ANYTIME THEY WANT. HOWEVER, IF THEY DO IT IN A GRADUATION SPEECH THERE MIGHT BE A PROBLEM AS MANY MIGHT CONSIDER THAT OFFENSIVE TO THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. BUT THEN, YOU COULD CARE LESS ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF OTHERS, RIGHT?).

KIDS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PRAYING IN SCHOOL AND AT FOOTBALL GAMES.

(ANOTHER LIE KAREN. YOU ARE REALLY RACKING UP THE DISHONESTY POINTS AT A RECORD PACE. THERE IS NO LAW IN AMERICA THAT PREVENTS KIDS FROM PRAYING IN SCHOOL OR AT FOOTBALL GAMES.

THEY ARE HOWEVER, PROHIBITED FROM FORCING OTHERS TO PRAY TO THEIR GOD, AND THAT IS WHAT REALLY HAS YOUR PANTIES ALL KNOTTED UP IN A BUNCH, ISN'T IT?).

LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES ARE ORDERED TO CEASE OPENING PRAYERS.

(WELL KAREN, IF YOU HAD KEPT UP ON THE NEWS YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN THAT CHRISTIANS ARE IGNORING THOSE ORDERS. THEY CLAIM THEY ANSWER TO A HIGHER AUTHORITY AND ARE NOT BOUND BY AMERICA'S LAWS).

A FEDERAL JUDGE ORDERS THAT A MEMORIAL CROSS THAT HAS STOOD IN THE MOJAVE DESERT SINCE 1934 TO HONOR WORLD WAR I DEAD BE COVERED — AN ATHEIST DRIVING BY WAS OFFENDED BY THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOL.

(KAREN, THE FACT THAT "YOU PEOPLE" ALWAYS LOSE IN COURT SHOULD BE A BIG HINT THAT MAYBE YOU ARE WRONG. BUT YOU CONTINUE TO TRY TO FORCE YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ON EVERYONE ELSE IN SPITE OF CONTINUALLY LOSING COURT CASE AFTER COURT CASE.

YOU CALL THEM "ACTIVIST JUDGES" EVEN THOUGH MOST OF THEM ARE CHRISTIANS. THEY JUST UNDERSTAND THE LAW BETTER THAN YOU DO).

THE ALABAMA SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE IS REMOVED FROM OFFICE FOR DEFYING A FEDERAL JUDGE'S ORDER TO REMOVE A GRAVEN TEN COMMANDMENTS FROM HIS COURTHOUSE.

(KAREN, AS LONG AS "YOU PEOPLE" CONTINUE TO ACT AS THOUGH YOU ARE ABOVE THE LAW, EVEN JUDGES WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ILLEGAL ACTIONS. MOST JUDGES DO NOT ALLOW THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS TO OVERRULE THEIR SWORN DUTY - THIS MAN DID - AND HE WAS PUNISHED FOR IT).

WHILE THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND MOSES HAS BEEN FORCIBLY EJECTED FROM THE PUBLIC SQUARE, WE ARE TO BE TOLERANT OF A MOSQUE ERECTED AS A MONUMENT TO THE 9/11 ATTACK ON AMERICA.

(KAREN, THOSE TWO IDEAS ARE NOT LOGICALLY CONNECTED. NOW YOUR PROBLEM IS BECOMING MORE CLEAR: YOU DO NOT POSSESS THE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS NECESSARY TO CONSTRUCT RATIONAL ARGUMENTS, BUT RATHER, BASE YOUR ARGUMENTS ON EMOTION AND WHAT YOU WANT TO BE TRUE.

ALL GODS WERE FORCIBLY EJECTED FROM THE PUBLIC SQUARE BY OUR FOUNDING FATHERS - AND MANY OF THEM WERE CHRISTIANS; AND WE ARE AS TOLERANT OF A MOSQUE NEAR GROUND ZERO AS WE ARE OF A CHURCH ERECTED NEAR GROUND ZERO.

IF YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE MOSQUE IS A MONUMENT TO THE ATTACK, THEN PRESENT IT. BUT YOU CAN'T - BECAUSE YOU DON'T).

AN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC MEDICAL CONFERENCE IN ORLANDO CALLED FOR SHARIAH LAW IN AMERICA 25 YEARS AGO — NOW A U.S. JUDGE HAS CITED SHARIAH LAW IN DISMISSING A CASE.

(KAREN, THAT VAGUE ACCUSATION REQUIRES A DETAILED EXPLANATION WHICH I DOUBT YOU WILL EVER PROVIDE. ONE THING RELIGIOUS FANATICS NEVER PROVIDE IS EVIDENCE - AND THERE IS A REASON FOR THAT: IT IS BECAUSE THE EVIDENCE NEVER SUPPORTS THEIR CLAIMS).

ISLAMIC CENTERS IN AMERICA ARE PROTECTED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT DESPITE THE OPEN SUPPORT OF AL-QAIDA BY SOME.

(KAREN, EVERYONE IN AMERICA IS PROTECTED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT.

UNLESS NEWS REPORTS HAVE BEEN MISLEADING US, IF SOMEONE IN AMERICA IS SUPPORTING A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, OUR GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE ACTION AGAINST THEM. IF NO ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN, THEN IT IS LIKELY DUE TO LACK OF EVIDENCE).

THE PRESIDENT AND THE MAYOR OF NEW YORK LECTURE US ON TOLERANCE AND SENSITIVITY.

(KAREN, IN YOUR CASE THIS HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN A WASTE OF TIME).

SEVENTY PERCENT OF AMERICANS OPPOSE THE GROUND ZERO MOSQUE.

(KAREN, OUR COUNTRY IS NOT GOVERNED BY OPINION POLLS BUT BY THE CONSTITUTION. AS RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL, THIS IS SOMETHING YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND. THIS ARTICLE MAKES ME SHIVER TO THINK THAT SOMEONE LIKE YOU ACTUALLY HAD AUTHORITY OVER OTHER HUMAN BEINGS. YOU DO NOT DEMONSTRATE THE RATIONALITY REQUIRED OF A GIRL SCOUT LEADER).

HOW ABOUT SENSITIVITY FOR THEM? TOLERANCE OF CHRISTIANS EXERCISING THEIR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS OF FREE SPEECH AND FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION?

(SO KAREN, HOW ARE THE RIGHTS OF FREE SPEECH OF CHRISTIANS BEING RESTRICTED? EVERYTIME I WATCH THE NEWS, I SEE CHRISTIANS SCREAMING ABOUT THE MOSQUE; THERE IS NO RESTRICTION AGAINST THEIR RIGHTS OF FREE SPEECH - AND THIS ARTICLE PROVES THAT YOU HAVE EXERCISED YOUR RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH, MISGUIDED AS IT IS.

HOW IS YOUR FREEDOM OF RELIGION BEING RESTRICTED? THE ONLY THING BEING RESTRICTED IS YOUR FREEDOM TO FORCE YOUR BELIEFS UPON EVERYONE ELSE).

THOMAS JEFFERSON: “A STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE WRITTEN LAW IS DOUBTLESS ONE OF THE HIGH DUTIES OF A GOOD CITIZEN, BUT IT IS NOT THE HIGHEST. THE LAWS OF NECESSITY, OF SELF-PRESERVATION, OF SAVING OUR COUNTRY WHEN IN DANGER, ARE OF HIGHER OBLIGATION. TO LOSE OUR COUNTRY BY A SCRUPULOUS ADHERENCE TO THE WRITTEN LAW, WOULD BE TO LOSE THE LAW ITSELF, WITH LIFE, LIBERTY, PROPERTY AND ALL THOSE WHO ARE ENJOYING THEM WITH US; THUS ABSURDLY SACRIFICING THE ENDS TO THE MEANS.”

(KAREN, JEFFERSON WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN. YOU SHOULD READ HIS "BIBLE" SOMETIME - BUT NOT AFTER A FULL MEAL.

THIS ARTICLE WAS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE AMAZING LEVEL OF DISHONESTY DISPLAYED BY CHRISTIANS WHETHER ATTACKING OUR SCIENCE CLASSES, OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, OR REWRITING OUR HISTORY TO WHITEWASH THEIR BRUTAL, BARBARIC HISTORY.

MODERN, CIVILIZED HUMANS HAVE TAKEN AWAY YOUR SLAVES, YOUR HORRIFIC LAWS THAT DECREED CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENTS (LIKE STONING AND BURNING) FOR MINOR RULE INFRACTIONS, AND PUT IN PLACE LAWS TO PROTECT THE WEAK WHOM YOU PEOPLE PREY UPON (LIKE HOMOSEXUALS, NONBELIEVERS, WOMEN, AND OTHERS).

YOU CAN SCREAM AND CRY ALL YOU WANT ABOUT HAVING YOUR RIGHTS TO HARRASS AND DISCRIMINATE TAKEN AWAY, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO REMOVE ALL YOUR BIBLICALLY-APPROVED INHUMAN ACTIVITIES UNTIL WE FINALLY CIVILIZE YOU GHOST WORSHIPPERS.

HAVE A NICE DAY KAREN).

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

ASIAN 'UNICORN' PHOTOGRAPHED FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER 10 YEARS

(AN EXAMPLE OF PISS-POOR REPORTING)

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN TEN YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A CONFIRMED SIGHTING OF ONE OF THE RAREST AND MOST MYSTERIOUS ANIMALS IN THE WORLD, THE SAOLA OF LAOS AND VIETNAM. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (ALSO KNOWN AS LAOS) ANNOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 15 THAT IN LATE AUGUST VILLAGERS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCE OF BOLIKHAMXAY CAPTURED A SAOLA AND BROUGHT IT BACK TO THEIR VILLAGE. THE ANIMAL DIED SEVERAL DAYS LATER, BUT WAS PHOTOGRAPHED WHILE STILL ALIVE.

THE SAOLA WAS DISCOVERED AS A SPECIES NEW TO SCIENCE ONLY IN 1992, IN VIETNAM'S VU QUANG NATURE RESERVE, NEAR THE COUNTRY'S BORDER WITH LAOS. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR ZOOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY. WITH THEIR LONG HORNS AND WHITE FACIAL MARKINGS, SAOLA RESEMBLE THE ANTELOPES OF NORTH AFRICA, BUT ARE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO WILD CATTLE.

SAOLA ARE SO SECRETIVE AND SO SELDOM SEEN (NO BIOLOGIST HAS EVER REPORTED SEEING ONE IN THE WILD) THAT THEY HAVE BEEN LIKENED TO UNICORNS (DESPITE ACTUALLY HAVING TWO HORNS).

(MY COMMENT: SO IF THEY HAVE TWO HORNS WHY ARE THEY "LIKENED" TO UNICORNS? JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE SECRETIVE AND SELDOM SEEN? THAT MEANS THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS COULD BE LIKENED TO UNICORNS).

IN FACT, AT LEAST ONE HISTORIAN HAS SPECULATED THAT A CHINESE MYTH OF A MAGICAL UNICORN, THE QILIN, MAY HAVE DERIVED FROM FAMILIARITY WITH SAOLA IN PREHISTORIC CHINA (ALTHOUGH THE SPECIES DOES NOT OCCUR THERE PRESENTLY, IF IT EVER DID).

(MY COMMENT: WHY DOES ONE HISTORIAN SPECULATING EQUAL A "FACT" IN YOUR MIND? WHY WOULD A TWO-HORNED ANTELOPE-LIKE ANIMAL INSPIRE A MYTH ABOUT A ONE-HORNED HORSE-LIKE ANIMAL? WERE THEY AT LEAST THE SAME COLOR?

IF THE SPECIES DOES NOT OCCUR THERE PRESENTLY AND MAY NEVER HAVE, HOW DO YOU DRAW A CONNECTION?).

TODAY, SAOLA OCCUR ONLY IN DENSE FORESTS OF THE ANNAMITE MOUNTAINS ALONG THE LAO/VIETNAMESE BORDER. THE SPECIES IS CLASSED AS "CRITICALLY ENDANGERED" BY THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE, AND PROBABLY NO MORE THAN A FEW HUNDRED SURVIVE. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST THREATENED LARGE MAMMALS ON THE PLANET, AND THERE ARE NONE IN ZOOS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE PROVINCIAL CONSERVATION UNIT OF BOLIKHAMXAY PROVINCE SAID: "THE DEATH OF THIS SAOLA IS UNFORTUNATE. BUT AT LEAST IT CONFIRMS AN AREA WHERE IT STILL OCCURS, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL IMMEDIATELY MOVE TO STRENGTHEN CONSERVATION EFFORTS THERE."

WHEN NEWS OF THE SAOLA'S CAPTURE REACHED LAO AUTHORITIES, THE BOLIKHAMXAY PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY DISPATCHED A TECHNICAL TEAM TO EXAMINE THE SAOLA AND RELEASE IT. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ANIMAL, AN ADULT MALE WEAKENED BY THE ORDEAL OF SEVERAL DAYS IN CAPTIVITY, DIED SHORTLY AFTER THE TEAM REACHED THE REMOTE VILLAGE.

THE LAO DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES ARE MOVING TO URGE VILLAGERS IN THE AREA NOT TO CAPTURE SAOLA, AND IMMEDIATELY RELEASE ANY THEY MIGHT ENCOUNTER.

*This is a saola, which was captured by villagers in Laos*

(MY COMMENT: THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A DECENT ARTICLE IF THE WRITER HAD NOT INJECTED THE MISLEADING SENSATIONALISM INTO THE STORY. BUT THEN, I THINK WE ALL KNOW WHY THEY DO THAT, DON'T WE?).

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ABROAD

FRENCH SENATE VOTES TO BAN ISLAMIC FULL VEIL IN PUBLIC

FRANCE'S SENATE HAS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED A BILL THAT WOULD BAN WEARING THE ISLAMIC FULL VEIL IN PUBLIC.

THE PROPOSED MEASURE WAS ALREADY BACKED BY THE LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, IN JULY.

THE BAN WILL COME INTO FORCE IN SIX MONTHS' TIME IF IT IS NOT OVERTURNED BY CONSTITUTIONAL JUDGES.

THE BAN HAS STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT, BUT CRITICS POINT OUT THAT ONLY A TINY MINORITY OF FRENCH MUSLIMS WEAR THE FULL VEIL.

PRESIDENT NICOLAS SARKOZY HAS BACKED THE BAN AS PART OF A WIDER DEBATE ON FRENCH IDENTITY BUT OPPONENTS SAY THE GOVERNMENT IS PANDERING TO FAR-RIGHT VOTERS.

SPAIN AND BELGIUM ARE DEBATING SIMILAR LEGISLATION, AND WITH SUCH LARGE-SCALE IMMIGRATION IN THE PAST 20 OR 30 YEARS, IDENTITY HAS BECOME A POPULAR THEME ACROSS EUROPE.

COUNCIL'S WARNING

ON TUESDAY, THE SENATE VOTED 246 TO 1 IN FAVOUR OF THE BILL.

RATIFICATION: BECOMES LAW IF PASSED BY SENATE IN SEPTEMBER

REVIEW: FRENCH CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL STUDIES NEW LAW ONCE IT IS RATIFIED

INTRODUCTION: TAKES EFFECT SIX MONTHS AFTER RATIFICATION

RULING: CHALLENGE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN STRASBOURG

IT WILL NOW BE SENT IMMEDIATELY TO FRANCE'S CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL WATCHDOG, WHICH HAS A MONTH TO CONFIRM ITS LEGALITY.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE IS POSSIBLE AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN STRASBOURG, WHERE DECISIONS ARE BINDING.

THERE ARE ESTIMATED TO BE ONLY ABOUT 2,000 WOMEN WEARING THE FULL VEIL IN FRANCE.

THE BILL MAKES IT ILLEGAL TO WEAR GARMENTS SUCH AS THE NIQAB OR BURKA, WHICH INCORPORATE A FULL-FACE VEIL, ANYWHERE IN PUBLIC.

IT LEVIES FINES OF ABOUT $250 FOR WOMEN WHO BREAK THE LAW AND $50,000 AND A ONE-YEAR JAIL TERM FOR MEN WHO FORCE THEIR WIVES TO WEAR THE BURKA.

THE NIQAB AND BURKA ARE WIDELY SEEN IN FRANCE AS THREATS TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE SECULAR NATURE OF THE STATE.

THE BILL IS ALSO SEEN AS A TOUCHSTONE FOR THE SARKOZY ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF INTEGRATION. IT IS GRAPPLING WITH DISAFFECTED IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AS IT SEEKS TO PREVENT A REPEAT OF THE MASS UNREST OF 2005 ON RUN-DOWN FRENCH HOUSING ESTATES.

IN MARCH, THE COUNCIL OF STATE, FRANCE'S HIGHEST ADMINISTRATIVE BODY, WARNED THAT THE LAW COULD BE FOUND UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

STEPHEN JAY GOULD (1941 –2002) 60 YEARS.

HE WAS AN AMERICAN PALEONTOLOGIST, EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGIST AND HISTORIAN OF SCIENCE. HE WAS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND WIDELY READ WRITERS OF POPULAR SCIENCE OF HIS GENERATION.

GOULD SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER TEACHING AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND WORKING AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NEW YORK. IN THE LATTER YEARS OF HIS LIFE, GOULD ALSO TAUGHT BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY NEAR HIS HOME IN SOHO.

GOULD'S GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE WAS THE THEORY OF PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM WHICH HE DEVELOPED WITH NILES ELDREDGE IN 1972. THE THEORY PROPOSES THAT MOST EVOLUTION IS MARKED BY LONG PERIODS OF EVOLUTIONARY STABILITY, WHICH IS PUNCTUATED BY RARE INSTANCES OF BRANCHING EVOLUTION. THE THEORY WAS CONTRASTED AGAINST PHYLETIC GRADUALISM, THE POPULAR IDEA THAT EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IS MARKED BY A PATTERN OF SMOOTH AND CONTINUOUS CHANGE IN THE FOSSIL RECORD.

MOST OF GOULD'S EMPIRICAL RESEARCH WAS BASED ON THE LAND SNAILS "POECILOZONITES AND CERION." HE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY, AND HAS RECEIVED WIDE PRAISE FOR HIS BOOK ONTOGENY AND PHYLOGENY. IN EVOLUTIONARY THEORY HE OPPOSED STRICT SELECTIONISM, SOCIOBIOLOGY AS APPLIED TO HUMANS, AND EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY. HE CAMPAIGNED AGAINST CREATIONISM AND PROPOSED THAT SCIENCE AND RELIGION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TWO DISTINCT FIELDS, OR "MAGISTERIA", WHOSE AUTHORITIES DO NOT OVERLAP.

MANY OF GOULD'S NATURAL HISTORY ESSAYS WERE REPRINTED IN COLLECTED VOLUMES, SUCH AS EVER SINCE DARWIN AND THE PANDA'S THUMB, WHILE HIS POPULAR TREATISES INCLUDED BOOKS SUCH AS THE MISMEASURE OF MAN, WONDERFUL LIFE AND FULL HOUSE.

"CREATION SCIENCE HAS NOT ENTERED THE CURRICULUM

FOR A REASON SO SIMPLE AND SO BASIC THAT WE OFTEN FORGET TO MENTION IT:

BECAUSE IT IS FALSE, AND BECAUSE GOOD TEACHERS UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHY IT IS FALSE. WHAT COULD BE MORE DESTRUCTIVE OF THAT MOST FRAGILE YET MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY IN OUR ENTIRE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE - GOOD TEACHING - THAN A BILL FORCING HONORABLE TEACHERS TO SULLY THEIR SACRED TRUST BY GRANTING EQUAL TREATMENT TO A DOCTRINE NOT ONLY KNOWN TO BE FALSE,

BUT CALCULATED TO UNDERMINE ANY GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE AS AN ENTERPRISE?"