

## House Resolution 1537

By: Representatives Snelling of the 99<sup>th</sup>, Barnes of the 97<sup>th</sup>, Cox of the 105<sup>th</sup> and Houston of the 166<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the State Board of Education and Department of Education to develop policies and  
2 curricula regarding teaching credible ideas, opinions, and theories about certain controversial  
3 subjects; to urge the development of training for teachers regarding management of debate  
4 about controversial subjects in the classroom; to urge the provision of supplemental materials  
5 to local boards of education to enhance information in textbooks; and for other purposes.

6 WHEREAS, on December 18, 2001, the United States Congress enacted House Bill 1, the  
7 "No Child Left Behind Act," which included the following language: "The (House and  
8 Senate) conferees recognize that a quality science education should prepare students to  
9 distinguish the data and testable theories of science from religious or philosophical claims  
10 that are made in the name of science. Where topics are taught that may generate controversy,  
11 the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist,  
12 why such topics may generate controversy, and how scientific discoveries can profoundly  
13 affect society."; and

14 WHEREAS, local boards of education in Georgia have broad constitutional authority to  
15 adopt policies for local schools, including policies which may discourage civil discourse on  
16 conflicting and controversial theories and opinions in anthropology, archaeology, history,  
17 philosophy, and science; and

18 WHEREAS, the information age and startling new discoveries have rendered it extremely  
19 difficult for textbooks to stay current on the spectrum of new and credible opinions, ideas,  
20 and theories in anthropology, archaeology, history, philosophy, and science; and

21 WHEREAS, the lack of discussion of controversial subject matter may hinder the academic  
22 development of students by prohibiting them from analyzing and evaluating all available  
23 data, learning about credible conflicting theories, and learning how to engage in civil  
24 discourse while energetically debating conflicting views, ideas, and theories; and

1 WHEREAS, one benefit of civil classroom discourse about conflicting theories, opinions,  
2 and ideas is an opportunity to help students develop their abilities in critical thinking; and

3 WHEREAS, limiting discussion of controversial subjects limits academic freedom.

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
5 the members of this body urge the State Board of Education and the Department of  
6 Education to develop policies that clarify that teaching credible ideas, opinions, and theories  
7 regarding controversial subjects in anthropology, archaeology, history, philosophy, and  
8 science is permitted; and to develop curricula that includes methods for managing the  
9 classroom discussion of controversial topics in a civil and academic manner.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body urge the State Board of  
11 Education and the Department of Education to develop training for teachers to equip them  
12 to manage classroom debate about controversial subjects.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body urge the State Board of  
14 Education and the Department of Education to provide supplemental materials to local  
15 boards of education to update textbooks so that information about credible new theories,  
16 ideas, and opinions are available to Georgia students.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
18 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the State Board of  
19 Education and the Department of Education.