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Iowa Academy of Science Position Paper on Creationism as a Scientific Explanation of Natural Phenomena

Iowa Academy of Science

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**Statement of the Position of the Iowa Academy of Science on the Validity of
Evolutionary Science and on the Status of Creationism as a Scientific
Explanation of Natural Phenomena**

Approved 31 January 1981
Updated and Approved by Board of Directors
13 October 1999
Update Approved by the Membership

Current attempts to introduce "scientific creationism", "creationism", or the Judeo-Christian biblical account of creation, as well as to reframe the discussion around terms such as "abrupt appearance theory", "intelligent design theory", or other disguised forms of creationism into the science classroom along with or instead of evolutionary science are strongly opposed by The Iowa Academy of Science on the grounds that creationism, in whatever form, is a religious doctrine and not science.

Creationist organizations that are advocating the teaching of "scientific creationism" or equal time for creationism along with evolution in the science classrooms include members purported to be scientists who have examined the evidence and have found creationism to be a superior alternative to evolution. They claim to know of evidence that supports the idea of a young earth and that shows evolution to be impossible. Much of this "evidence" is inaccurate, out of date, and not accepted by recognized paleontologists, geologists, astronomers, and biologists. The total membership of these "scientific" creationist groups constitutes only a fraction of one percent of the scientific personnel in this country, and the major scientific organizations of this country all support evolutionary concepts as valid. Most "scientific creationists", are not trained in biology or geology, the areas in which professional judgments are made in the field of evolutionary theory. These "scientific creationists" often misrepresent the positions of respected scientists and quote them out of context to support their own views before audiences and government bodies. They are driven by the notion that all explanations of natural events must conform to their preconceived views. These tactics are used to give the uninformed public the false impression that science itself is confused. Then a supernatural explanation is proposed to bring order out of apparent chaos. Not only are the arguments offered by creationists misrepresentations, they also include distortions and misconceptions of scientific facts and concepts. This includes the meaning of the word "theory" which scientists use to describe the integrating group of fundamental principles underlying a science. The evidence in support of evolutionary science has accumulated for over one hundred years, and the evidence has been strengthened further by molecular techniques developed since the 1970s. While science continually reexamines and reevaluates theory as new evidence is presented, the basic tenets of evolutionary theory have never been in doubt.

The Iowa Academy of Science urges legislators, school administrators, educators, and the general public not to be misled by the tactics of these so-called "scientific creationists." The Academy respects the right of persons to hold diverse religious beliefs, including those that reject evolution, but only as matters of theology or faith, nor as secular science. Creationism is not science and the Academy deplores and opposes any attempt to disguise it as science. Most recognized scientists find no conflict between religious faith and acceptance of evolution. They do not view evolution as being anti-religious. They have no vested interest in supporting evolution as do the "scientific creationists" in supporting creationism, but merely consider evolution as being most consistent with the best evidence.

The Iowa Academy of Science feels strongly that the distinction between science and religion must be maintained. A state with one of the highest literacy rates and with the highest scientific literacy scores in the nation, and one which prides itself on the individuality of its citizens, should discriminate in its public education system between what is science and what is not science.