

Science Under Attack: From Kansas to COPUS



1999 battle was led by young-earth creationists -

"Evolution is not good science, and, as such, we don't believe it should be presented."



Steve Abrams, Chair, Kansas State Board of Education

Sept 16, 1999

One can't believe in the Bible and evolution. You must believe one or the other.



Steve Abrams, Chair, Kansas State Board of Education

Sept 24, 2005, Lawrence Journal-World

"The strategy this time is not to go for the whole enchilada. We're trying to be a little more subtle," he said. To fundamentalist Christians, Fox said, the fight to teach God's role in creation is becoming the essential front in America's culture war.

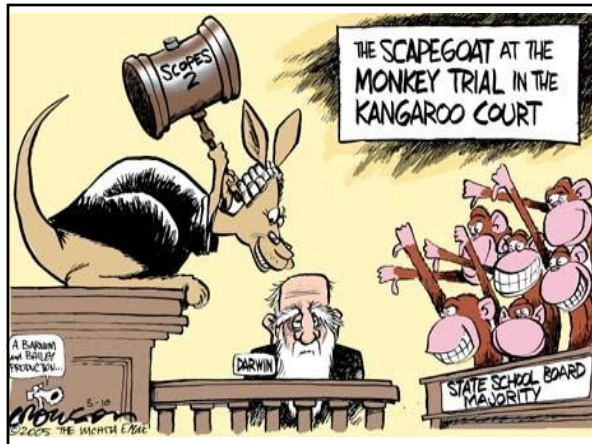
If evolution's boosters can be forced to back down, he said, the Christian right's agenda will advance. "If you believe God created that baby, it makes it a whole lot harder to get rid of that baby," Fox said. "If you can cause enough doubt on evolution, liberalism will die."

"Creationism's going to be our big battle. We're hoping that Kansas will be the model, and we're in it for the long haul," Fox said. He added that it does not matter "who gets the credit, as long as we win."

Washington Post, March 14, 2005

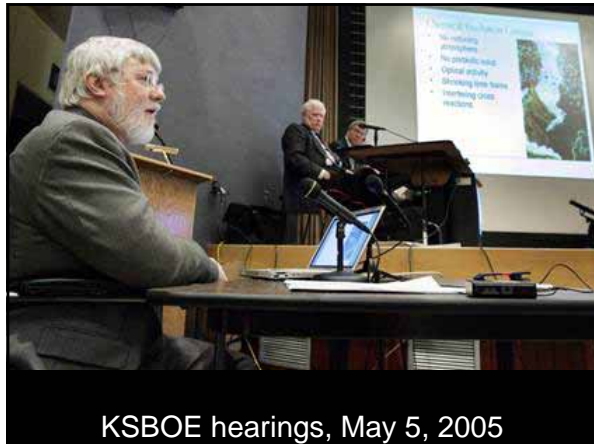


Rev. Terry Fox, Immanuel Baptist Church, Wichita, KS.



KSBOE hearings on evolution

- 3 'judges' are avowed creationists
- Invite the biggest names in science
 - Elevates credibility of ID
- Outcome is pre-determined
 - Regardless of 'evidence'
 - ID given equal status



KSBOE hearings, May 5, 2005

Intelligent Design frame



- Life is too complex to have developed by chance
- Science can NEVER explain some unknowns (so we have to turn to the supernatural, and redefine science)
- Evolution is a theory in crisis
- The scientific establishment is a rigid orthodoxy that keeps out new ideas
- Students are prevented from hearing alternate scientific theories
- Teach the controversy -- it's only fair
- Don't require ID to be taught

Framing

- "It is a common folk theory of progressives that 'the facts will set you free.' If only you can get all the facts out there in the public eye, then every rational person will reach the right conclusion. It is a vain hope. Human brains just don't work that way. Framing matters. Frames once entrenched are hard to dispel."

— George Lakoff, "Don't Think of an Elephant"

Framing

"You cannot win just by stating the true facts and showing that they contradict your opponent's claims. Frames trump facts.

Always reframe."

George Lakoff, "Don't Think of an Elephant"

BOYCOTT!

- Kansas Citizens for Science (KCFS) called for a scientific boycott of the hearings
- Endorsed by the AAAS
- Boycott was successful

KCFS: boycott but engagement

—scientists, teachers, theologians

Press packets
Information booth
Press availability
Post-game analysis



A National Campaign to Improve the Public Understanding of Science



“...public appreciation of science, the scientific process, and the impacts of scientific advancements on our quality of life is necessary for continued support of the national scientific enterprise.”

COPUS workshop, 2006



Goals are to empower Americans to

- Appreciate the pragmatic outcomes of science
- Distinguish science from non-science
- Participate in discourse that depends on science

COPUS workshop, 2006



COPUS vision

- Network among the scientific and science education communities
- Engage business and industry
- Learn to communicate and frame the message
- “Think tank”
- Provide science proponents with tools to speak up
- Empower one million scientists



COPUS Network



Berkeley Natural History Museums

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www.copusproject.org