



## National Association of Geoscience Teachers

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February 1, 2017

Speaker G. Mark Mickelson  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Minority Leader Spencer Hawley  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Chairman Timothy Johns  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Vice Chairman Thomas R. Holmes  
South Dakota House of Representatives  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Speaker Mickelson, Minority Leader Hawley, Chairman Johns, and Vice Chairman Holmes,

On behalf of the students, parents, teachers of South Dakota, and our membership, the National Association of Geoscience Teachers urges your opposition to Senate Bill 55. The bill, currently under consideration by the South Dakota House of Representatives, states, “No teacher may be prohibited from helping students understand, analyze, critique, or review in an objective scientific manner the strengths and weaknesses of scientific information presented in courses being taught which are aligned with the content standards established pursuant to § 13-3-48.”

While the language may appear harmless, its intent is not. It is intended to encourage some teachers and administrators to deviate from the science curriculum and introduce information that will confuse students. By allowing deviation from science curriculum regarding ideas as foundational to science as evolution, this bill threatens to make South Dakota’s students unprepared for college coursework and for careers that depend upon solid understandings of science, mathematics, and technology. Weakening the curriculum in this way also makes South Dakota less appealing to science-based industries and professionals – and the dollars they bring.

Further, should this become law, it is likely to result in expensive and lengthy legal battles that will ultimately lead to the law’s repeal, the waste of taxpayer dollars, and the diminishment of the reputation of South Dakota and its educational system.

Please keep South Dakota’s science classrooms and students on track. Oppose the passage of Senate Bill 55.

Sincerely,

Don Duggan-Haas, Ph.D.  
First Vice President and Advocacy Committee Chair