

# The American Society of Human Genetics

## Policy Statement

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April 11, 2012

### **ASHG Statement on Tennessee Law Undermining the Teaching of Evolution**

The [American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\)](#) is disappointed with Tennessee's enactment of a bill that will weaken science instruction in Tennessee's public schools and possibly serve as a model for other states. The law claims to support the development of critical-thinking skills, but the effect of the "strengths and weaknesses" argument used in the law will be to weaken students' already poor understanding of evolution – the foundation of modern biology.

The language of [House Bill 368](#), which became law on April 10, 2012, without Governor Haslam's signature, specifically mentions the topics of "biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning" as examples of issues that should be subject to scrutiny. ASHG shares with its colleagues in the scientific community a growing concern over low levels of public scientific literacy, which are magnified by publicity over "controversial theories" that are, in fact, not controversial at all. A century of genetics research, much of it by ASHG members, has substantially strengthened the already robust evidence for evolution that has emerged from many other sciences.

House Bill 368 became law over the objections of the Tennessee Science Teachers Association, the Tennessee Education Association, the National Center for Science Education, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and many other scientific and professional organizations.