

# Science group boycotts New Orleans over law on science teaching: The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology

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A national organization of scientists has informed Governor Bobby Jindal that it will not hold its annual convention in Louisiana as long as the state's recently adopted science curriculum standards remain on the books.

The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology told Jindal that its executive committee chose Salt Lake City for its 2011 convention over New Orleans "in large part" because of the science standards. The letter from society president Richard Satterlie is posted on the group's Web site under the headline: "No Thanks, New Orleans."

"That's too bad," Jindal spokesperson Kyle Plotkin said of the group's decision. "New Orleans is a first-class city for a convention." Plotkin said the governor did not respond to Satterlie's letter.

Jindal, a first-term governor, has enjoyed popularity among fellow Republicans as a new political face. Picked by the GOP to respond to President Obama's nationally televised February 24 address to Congress, Jindal criticized the \$787 billion stimulus package as irresponsible.

Many science groups, both in Louisiana and nationally, urged Jindal to veto a bill last year allowing science teachers to use supplemental materials on topics such as evolution, global warming and cloning.

They cast the law as a back-door attempt to allow Judeo-Christian creation theology or "intelligent design"—the concept that biological life forms are created by an intelligent being—to be taught as part of science class. But Jindal agreed with the

bill's supporters that science teachers need wider latitude to use supplemental materials.

State teachers unions have said educators already are free to use materials other than textbooks, though a handful of students testified before lawmakers that teachers are sometimes unsure of how to handle questions that challenge established scientific theories, particularly evolution. *-Religion News Service*