

The “Consensus”—or Else!

Dumbing-down science education: The National Center for Science Education and Global Warming

By Casey Luskin

Summary: *The National Center for Science Education targets the nation’s schools in order to enforce the supposed “consensus” on hot-button scientific controversies—specifically, evolutionary theory and Global Warming theory. Its dogmatic approach violates principles of free speech and academic freedom, and actually makes it less likely that students will receive the science education they need if they are to make informed decisions in the future.*

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a nonprofit group that is described as a watchdog over the education of the nation’s children. Its core mission: to enforce a purported “scientific consensus” on hot-button issues, particularly evolutionary theory (NCSE’s focus since the 1980s) and Global Warming theory (NCSE’s focus since 2012).

NCSE’s supporters see it as an organization that protects science from the attack of ignorant, religious, countrified yahoos and bumpkins. Its detractors see it as a campaign to stifle the free and open debate that is critical to a free society and that is a necessary condition for scientific progress.

Critics believe that, by seeking to put a lid on scientific controversies, NCSE actually serves as an impediment to science education—such that many school systems and individual teachers avoid teaching about the topics extensively, or avoid the topics entirely, in order to avoid the wrath of “consensus” enforcers. As a result, America’s schoolchildren learn neither the facts underlying the theories and counter-theories, nor the reasoning processes by which real science separates fact from fiction.



Classroom indoctrination was satirized in an episode of the TV cartoon *South Park* when former Vice President Al Gore (left) told schoolchildren to beware the monster ManBearPig, “half man, half bear, half pig.”

Unquestionably, many NCSE supporters believe it promotes the teaching of sound science. But in fact, over its history of more than three decades, in almost all of its battles at every level—the federal government, “Common Core,” the courts, state legislatures, school boards, and individual schools—NCSE has attempted not to promote good science education but to censor views with which it disagrees.

Propagandizing kids

Indoctrination in the schools is nothing new. During the lead-up to Prohibition, supporters of a ban on alcoholic beverages planted propaganda in textbooks declaring that drinking alcohol could cause a person to combust spontaneously in blue flame. In the Scopes “monkey trial” of 1925, the American Civil Liberties Union defended the use in a classroom of the book *A Civic Biology*, which taught

evolution but also white supremacy and eugenics (that is, the need to eliminate “parasitic” people from the population). In 1957, at a key point in the Civil Rights movement, the textbook *Alabama History for Schools* declared that slavery was beneficial, “the earliest form of social security.”

Today, across the country, the classroom is a battleground on controversies ranging from gun owners’ rights to the effect of tax cuts on the economy to the

June 2014

NCSE: The “Consensus”—or Else!
Page 1

The Fairness Problem
Page 4

Green Notes
Page 8

history of conflict between Christianity and Islam.

Today, the desire to use schools to shape the future of politics is reflected in such publications as *Radical Teacher* (which described itself as “socialist” and “feminist”) and *Green Teacher*. The latter magazine, according to its website, offers “great kid-tested ideas for fostering learning and inspiring action on environmental and other global issues! Written by and for educators, *Green Teacher* is a quarterly magazine for those working with young people, aged 6-19, inside and outside of schools.”

NCSE's origin

In the spring of 1980, biologist Wayne Moyer published editorials in *BioScience* and *The American Biology Teacher* urging the formation of local groups of activist scientists and educators to oppose the teaching of “creation science” in public schools. Fearful that creationist initiatives might lead to “an American equivalent of the Lysenko affair,” Moyer proposed to “organize Committees of Correspondence on Evolution, composed of people willing to communicate the meaning and wonder of evolution to the public.” (The “Lysenko affair” refers to the effort by Soviet director of biology Trofim Lysenko to impose a single, false view of genetics and hybridization on Soviet agriculture. Enforcement of his ideas led both to the persecution of dissenting scientists

and to poor farming practices and mass starvation.)

Under Moyer's vision, these Committees of Correspondence on Evolution (CCEs) would be “joined into a national information network” which would “make available lists of biologists willing to speak on evolution; gather and disseminate information on creationist activities; write and publish critiques and rebuttals of creationist writings; and hold workshops” to challenge creationists.

In January 1981, a man named Stanley Weinberg began publishing a national newsletter, the *Memorandum to Liaisons for Committees of Correspondence*, to coordinate CCE activities. Weinberg was a retired high school biology teacher, a prominent high school biology textbook author, and former president of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Moyer invited prospective CCE leaders to attend a meeting in Washington D.C. to craft a proposal for this network for consideration by scientific and educational societies. In October 1981, some two dozen leaders of scientific societies and teachers' organizations came together in Washington, D.C. to “form a united effort or coalition to combat creationism and support the Committees.” The meeting was hosted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the most prestigious scientific body in the U.S.*

The National Association of Biology Teachers organized a follow-up meeting to help plan the CCE network. These efforts were successful. By December 1981, the number of states with CCEs grew to 42.

Spokesmen for these groups denied they were orchestrated by a large consortium of scientific societies, universities, and government agencies; instead they described themselves as “local lobbying groups that are combating creationist efforts at the grass roots level.” The CCEs did operate locally, focused on monitoring and “fighting the creationists” in their respective states, but they had strong backing, sup-

port, and national coordination from some of the most prestigious scientific societies and educational groups in the country.

Moyer was director of the NABT, and he used his national position to seek funding for the CCEs from major biological and other scientific societies. The groups took on an aggressive, if not militaristic, ethos, as the name “Committees of Correspondence,” coined by Moyer, alluded to groups of that name organized by patriots during the Revolutionary War to share strategies for fighting the British. Of course, unlike the Revolutionary War committees, those organized during the 1980s to fight creationism had the establishment entirely on their side.

In January 1982, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) hosted the first official national meeting of CCE representatives. Participants discussed the creation of a national organization to coordinate committee efforts. That led to the NCSE, with Stanley Weinberg elected as the founding president. By 1986, NCSE was operating as an “umbrella organization” coordinating a network of CCEs in most U.S. states as well as five Canadian provinces.

For almost all of its existence, NCSE's most prominent figure has been Dr. Eugenie Scott, a physical anthropologist who was present, as a representative of Kentucky's CCE, at that critical meeting

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* **Editor's note:** NAS was created during the Lincoln administration to provide advice on science and, it was hoped, help solve the problems of a nation in the midst of the Civil War. Its most prominent founder was Louis Agassiz, famous for both real science (he was the first to scientifically propose the idea of an Ice Age) and bad science (he was a father of so-called “scientific racism,” the scientific consensus that wrongly supported white supremacy). Today NAS members elect new members, for life terms, a selection process that fosters the politicization of science and, often, the involvement of scientists in policy matters about which they know little.—*SJA*

at AAAS in January 1982. The Carnegie Foundation and other private foundations provided a grant to the NCSE to open a national office and find an executive director, and she held that office from 1986 until her retirement in 2013.

According to a history of NCSE in the *American Society for Cell Biology* newsletter, by the time Scott was hired in 1986, “the activities of the Committees [of Correspondence] had substantially diminished, and Scott introduced a truly U.S.-wide agenda of education and action.” From that national vantage, NCSE focused on collecting and disseminating information about creationists’ educational activities to the NCSE’s activist-members, and on coordinating local efforts to ensure that none of the 17,000 school districts in the U.S. taught creationism.

The threat of ID

Creationism is the belief that the universe, life, and the various forms of life are the product of divine creation rather than natural, blind evolutionary processes. Creationists include (but are not limited to) those who believe in a literal Biblical account of creation and believe that the earth is some 6,000 years old.

In the mid-1990s, increasing numbers of scientists and non-scientists began to express interest in Intelligent Design (ID), a different concept that does not depend on religious belief and does not challenge mainstream views about the age of the earth, but suggests that an intelligent cause is the best explanation for many features of nature, such as the complexity of life.

NCSE’s supporters apparently found ID threatening, because from 1997 to 2007, the group’s annual budget rose from \$250,000 to about \$800,000, and its staff roster increased from four employees to fourteen. The organization was heavily involved in the 2005 *Kitzmiller v. Dover* trial which, under pressure from a coalition of NCSE, the ACLU, and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, banned ID from public schools in Dover, Pennsylvania.

In 2000, NCSE’s then-President Kevin Padian, a University of California, Berkeley paleontologist, and Eugenie Scott were awarded a \$450,000 taxpayer-funded grant (on which NCSE was a subcontractor) from the National Science Foundation to create a website to help teachers teach evolution.

Scott retired as NCSE executive director in 2013 (she now chairs its Advisory Council) and was succeeded by Ann Reid, a biologist who spent twenty years doing virus research at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Reid entered the policy arena in 2005, first working at the National Academy of Sciences’ Board on Life Sciences and later serving as director at the American Academy of Microbiology.

When Reid’s hiring was announced, the journal *Science* reported she “hopes to attract support from private foundations and government agencies with interests that dovetail with [NCSE’s] mission.” The chair of the board of governors for the American Academy of Microbiology called her “an expert at navigating the science-policy-society interface.”

Elite support

Today, NCSE has an annual budget of around \$1 million and employs some 15 staff, including Ph.D. scientists, former teachers, and a theologian. The organization and its supporters poor-mouth themselves by claiming they must battle “lavishly funded right-wing” opponents, but the NCSE has enjoyed large amounts of government money available for its projects that its opponents could only dream of obtaining.

NCSE is the beneficiary of grassroots activism on the part of scientists, educators, and others who support its mission. But much of its support comes from powerful groups that are pillars of the political establishment and the scientific-technological elite. (President Eisenhower, in his farewell address, warned of the danger “that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.”)

Indeed, NCSE has been collaboratively envisioned, created, and supported financially by elite establishment groups, including the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Association of Biology Teachers, the National Science Teachers Association, the National Science Foundation, and many other national educational and scientific (or scientist-activist) organizations.

NCSE is organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Oakland, California, and describes itself as “devoted to promoting and enhancing the teaching of science, especially the evolutionary sciences and the climate sciences, in formal and informal education, especially in K-12 public schools.” According to some of its most recent public tax filings, NCSE has two major programs:

► The Public Information Program provides “information and advice” to hundreds of teachers, parents, and members of the news media “about climate change and evolution education.” Through this project, the NCSE gives dozens of annual workshops and presentations to organizations, including national and state scientific and educational societies. Practically, this means that scientists, educators, and activists contact the NCSE for strategic and rhetorical advice on rebutting arguments—in the classroom, the boardroom, and the media—of those who doubt the “consensus” on evolution and Global Warming.

► Its Public & Internet Media program distributes material about current events regarding “the creation/evolution and climate change controversies.” That includes six issues per year of NCSE’s journal, *Reports of the National Center for Science Education*, which has a circulation of about 5,000. On the Internet, NCSE has a moderately impressive presence, with a weekly electronic newsletter that reaches about 4,000 people, a website that got a reported 680,000 unique visitors in 2012, and a Facebook page that recently showed some 48,000 “likes.”

The Fairness Problem

by Steven J. Allen

In 1986, I was nominated for the state school board in Alabama. My position on the teaching of evolution was this: “If you don’t know the basic ideas of evolution, you’re not an educated person. And if you don’t know the major criticisms of evolutionary theory, you’re not an educated person.”

For my position on the issue, the Lieutenant Governor called me a “religious fanatic.”

That’s how some people react when you try to treat both sides fairly on an issue like evolution.

Most Americans, though, believe the government has no business ramming ideas down people’s throats. To them, a my-way-or-the-highway approach to the debate on any controversial matter is abhorrent.

The importance of open debate is one of the key concepts underlying the First Amendment. But that concept is not the only reason to maintain a level of skepticism about claims of a scientific consensus, no matter how “settled” the science seems to be. The fact is, the consensus is often wrong. (Indeed, on matters related to public policy, the scientific consensus is almost *always* wrong.)

In a recent article on NCSE’s Eugenie Scott, Sherri Cruz of the *Orange County Register* explained Scott’s strategy for dealing with contrarians by focusing on the “three pillars” of the contrarians’ arguments—the science pillar (arguments over the facts), the ideology pillar (arguments over political philosophy), and the cultural pillar. Cruz wrote of the cultural pillar:

This is, arguably, the most effective pillar that creationists and climate change contrarians have, Scott said. Americans believe in fairness and equal time and letting everyone have their say. This sometimes works to the detriment of science education.

Groups that argue against evolution and climate change . . . often stress that it’s fair and allows for academic freedom and enables critical thinking. They say both sides should be taught and that teaching both sides increases the students’ ability to think critically.

Fairness is built into American culture, she said, but it’s not relevant to what should be in educa-

tional curriculum. To illustrate this point, consider the recent National Science Foundation survey that found one in four people believe the sun goes around the Earth. But whether the sun goes around the Earth or the Earth goes around the sun is not a matter of opinion. “Let’s give people who know something about the subject matter responsibility for determining the curriculum,” Scott said.

Damn that fairness!

Note the glaring problem in Scott’s reasoning. The idea that the sun goes around the earth *was, for thousands of years, the scientific consensus*. More than 97% of astronomers and other scientists believed it to be true, and those who denied geocentrism were ostracized.

For the science totalitarians, the real problem with fairness is that it enables people to think for themselves. That is something the totalitarians cannot abide.

I happen to believe in most aspects of evolutionary theory, but I am well aware that much of it—at least, the version taught in schools based on the “consensus”—has turned out to be wrong. Evolution isn’t gradual and steady, as I was taught; it moves in fits and starts. Life doesn’t always evolve toward increasing complexity, as I was taught. So-called Haeckelian recapitulation (“ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”), that is, the idea that embryonic development shows the path of evolution, has also turned out to be wrong. The Miller-Urey experiment showing how life could have arisen from chemicals in the primordial atmosphere—that concept was mostly wrong. Those moths that turned dark because of pollution darkening the barks of trees—the pictures were fakes, and any moths that “turned dark” turned right back after the pollution was reduced; no new species were created. The genetic code, it turns out, isn’t like a blueprint; it engages in a complex dance with the world around an organism. “Junk” DNA is important, not junk. And, contrary to what I was taught, evolutionary science doesn’t prove that some races of people are superior to others.

We know these things because no one—not NCSE or anyone else—was able to shut down the debate about the origin of life and the origin of species. In that, there’s a lesson for all of us.

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NCSE claims to have some 5,000 members who are “scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious and political affiliations.” This description of NCSE members fits into the organization’s strategy—portraying itself as religiously and politically neutral and focused on defending only the supposed consensus. As part of this strategy, the NCSE showcases conservatives who accept the “consensus” on Global Warming or evolution. Scott explained: “Finding the people who think ideologically but still accept the science is what we would like to do. Our job at NCSE, at least in global warming and evolution, has been . . . to find the people in intermediate positions who hold those ideological positions, find the conservative Christians who accept evolution, find the Republicans who accept global warming, find the libertarians who accept global warming and say, ‘See, you don’t need to let ideology get in the way to accept the science.’”

Scott has claimed that “the most important group” she works with is “members of the faith community,” and she counsels public school teachers to send students to interview pro-Darwin clergy in order to stress “the compatibility of theology with the science of evolution.”

But NCSE’s leadership is far from objective and non-ideological. Scott is also a public signer of the Third Humanist Manifesto, which aspires to create a world with “a progressive philosophy of life . . . without supernaturalism” and makes broad metaphysical claims that “Humans are . . . the result of unguided evolutionary change” and nature is “self-existing.” The manifesto praises “progressive cultures” and seeks “a just distribution of nature’s resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.”

Other NCSE officials have similar anti-religious affiliations. Barbara Forrest, a member of NCSE’s board of directors, is also on the board of directors of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, which is affiliated with prominent national atheist groups, including the American

Humanist Association (AHA), which published the Third Humanist Manifesto. The NCSE has direct ties to these humanist groups: Its primary newsletter, *Reports of the National Center for Science Education*, is directly descended from an earlier journal, *Creation/Evolution*, originally published by the AHA and later acquired by NCSE.

Underscore the mindset of these groups: In 1996, prominent scientist Richard Dawkins was AHA’s Humanist of the Year; in his acceptance speech he stated that “faith is one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate.”

In 2009, the NCSE accidentally leaked talking points it provided for activists in Texas which stated: “Science posits that there are no forces outside of nature. Science cannot be neutral on this issue. The history of science is a long comment denying that forces outside of nature exist, and proving that this is the case again and again.” The document even encouraged activists to wax theological: “All educated people understand there are no forces outside of nature.”

Scott has insisted that NCSE’s “goals are not to promote disbelief,” but rather to push people to “understand evolution and hopefully accept it.” Nonetheless, she has acknowledged that evolution is “threatening” to those who take “a human exceptionalism kind of view.” She added, “Darwinian evolution needs to be coped with, and it may not be psychologically easy.” Taken together, NCSE’s affiliations and the comments of Scott and others suggest a lack of sincerity in NCSE’s outreach to religious believers and to conservatives, Republicans, and non-liberals in general.

From evolution to Global Warming theory

In 2009, NCSE got involved in the fight over education policy in Texas, in order to influence the state’s standards on the teaching of evolution. It was unsuccessful, for the most part, with regard to evolution. But evolution wasn’t the

only controversy facing Texas schools. The state’s new standards also required students to “analyze and evaluate different views on the existence of global warming,” and NCSE was obliged to take a position—which led to the group’s involvement in the Global Warming issue.

In January 2012, the NCSE declared its plan to launch a “new initiative to defend and support the teaching of climate change” and to oppose “climate change denial.” In December of that year, NCSE hosted a Climate and Energy Literacy Summit in Berkeley, California. The summit brought together approximately 50 “climate activists” representing think tanks (Brookings Institute, Frameworks Institute, Will Steger Foundation), environmentalist groups (Campaign for Environmental Literacy, Alliance for Climate Education, BlueGreen Alliance, Climate Nexus, Social Capital Project, Ecological Society of America), education (National Science Teachers Association, Technical Education Research Centers), philanthropy (Nonprofit Finance Fund, Carnegie Museum), journalism (*National Geographic*), scientific societies (American Geophysical Union), federal and state agencies (National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Global Change Research Program), and the National Academy of Sciences.

According to a summit report, their goal was to develop a “coordinated national initiative” to “substantially and measurably improve climate and energy literacy,” with “literacy” defined as a belief that “human activities are warming the planet, that the resulting climatic changes have serious consequences, and that steps can be taken to minimize negative impacts.” The initiative aimed to dramatically increase the number of teachers who cover climate change, and to assist educators “in coping with climate science denial, including scientific rebuttals and guidance on best practices for countering denial and manufactured doubt.” (“Denial” and “manufactured doubt” are terms used by environmental extremists to denigrate scientists and others who express skepticism

on the Global Warming issue, likening such skeptics to Nazi sympathizers, heretics, or unscrupulous Madison Avenue ad men.)

The summit report made clear that cash was critical to the “climate literacy” effort. Central to the initiative was raising both public and private funding from government sources such as the NSF, NOAA, and NASA as well as from private foundations. The money would go to help develop curricula and to put pressure on schools to “become living laboratories for climate and energy studies” so that “most students in the nation could attain basic climate and energy literacy in less than a decade.” The involvement of religious leaders and members of environmentalist or “social justice” groups was encouraged.

NCSE’s website laments that, “People and organizations who deny or doubt the scientific consensus around climate change have attempted to undermine climate change education.” NCSE aims to combat this “doubt” using the same methods it has deployed within the evolution debate—by networking with leading scientific, educational, and activist groups to provide resources and advice so educators, scientists, and others can promote the “pro-consensus-only” viewpoint in all levels of education, and the public square.

Since launching its Climate Change Initiative, NCSE staffers have published articles in prominent journals encouraging scientists to serve as advocates. Writing last year in *BioScience*, NCSE deputy director Glenn Branch issued a “call to arms” to biologists, saying that, as with creationism, “It is time for biologists to help resist the danger posed by climate change denial, too.” He charged, “Unlike evolution, climate science is not yet comfortably ensconced in the K-12 educational system; there is a lot of work to do before it is.”

Today, roughly a year and a half after the Berkeley summit, NCSE serves as a hub, coordinating efforts through the schools to persuade students and the general public to accept the supposed “consensus.”

Citizen Engagement Laboratory, a summit participant, openly admits the agenda is to “strive to make those who deny climate science or stand in the way of action politically toxic.”

Next Generation Science Standards

According to the summit report, the first step toward achieving the project’s goals involves pushing states to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)—nationalized science standards released last year by some of the same groups backing “Common Core.” According to the *New York Times*, the NGSS were drafted specifically to “combat widespread scientific ignorance” and recommend “that climate change be taught as early as middle school.” The NCSE was

a “critical stakeholder” involved in the drafting of the standards, and according to the NGSS website, “critiqued successive, confidential drafts of the standards and provided feedback to the writers.”

In kindergarten, the NGSS train students to solve Global Warming by learning to “design and build a structure that will reduce the warming effect of sunlight on an area.”

By middle school, the “emphasis” is on “the major role that human activities play in causing the rise in global temperatures.” The NGSS pull no punches, stating: “Human activities, such as the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, are major factors in the current rise in Earth’s mean surface temperature (global warming).”

Editor’s note: The National Council for Science Education makes little effort to hide its left-wing orientation. A Frequently Asked Question on NCSE’s website is “What organizations does NCSE work with?” The answer includes, among those with which NCSE “cooperates nationally and locally,” Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Norman Lear-founded People for the American Way. (PFAW hosts “Right Wing Watch,” which monitors the activities of conservatives, libertarians, and other non-“Progressives.” PFAW’s founding president was Tony Podesta, now an ultra-rich Washington lobbyist, whose brother John was president of the Center for American Progress and serves as an adviser to President Obama.)

NCSE describes itself as “an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.” AAAS’s political tilt is well to the left, and has been for many decades. I’ve identified at least seven AAAS presidents during the period 1931-1951 who were members of the American Association of Scientific Workers (AASW), a Soviet front group that took a pro-Hitler position after the Hitler-Stalin Pact. During that period, three men served as presidents of both AAAS and AASW. The two groups were often referred to as sister organizations, with AASW as the overtly political arm of AAAS.

A Pew Research Center study in 2009 suggested that only six percent of AAAS members are Republicans and nine percent conservatives—a result that, comically, was reported in *The Huffington Post* as “Only Six Percent of Scientists Are Republicans.” (That’s the equivalent of saying something like “90% of Christians are Republicans” based on a poll of the Christian Coalition.)

AAAS is well-connected and highly influential. One recent president was the late paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, whom Marxists consider one of their own. The current science advisor to President Obama is a former AAAS president, John Holdren—a Global Warming activist who wrote favorably in a 1977 book about such methods of “population control” as forced abortions and involuntary sterilization. Holdren suggested that the government could legitimately put sterilizing chemicals in the water supply if that could be accomplished without affecting “members of the opposite sex, children, old people, pets, or livestock.” —SJA

In high school, students are taught that “Changes in the atmosphere due to human activity have increased carbon dioxide concentrations and thus affect climate,” and that man-made climate change includes “changes in surface temperatures, precipitation patterns, glacial ice volumes, sea levels, and biosphere distribution.”

What does science really say about glacial ice volumes and surface temperatures? According to a 2013 paper in *Nature Geoscience*, “sea ice surrounding Antarctica has expanded, with record extent in 2010.” Likewise, a 2009 paper in *Geophysical Research Letters* reported that annual mean Antarctic sea ice has increased at a rate of almost 1% per decade since the 1970s. As for the Arctic, the 5.35 million square kilometers of sea ice observed in September 2013 was 1.72 million square kilometers higher than the previous year, which overturns a prediction made by scientists in 2007 that by the summer of 2013, the Arctic would be “ice-free.” Such failed predictions and inconvenient data are omitted from the NGSS, which instead uncritically teach that, “Though the magnitudes of human impacts are greater than they have ever been, so too are human abilities to model, predict, and manage current and future impacts.”

As for changes in average temperature, the NGSS teach that “although future regional climate changes will be complex and varied, average global temperatures will continue to rise.” But there is no mention that, as *Nature* reported last year, “the annual-mean global temperature has not risen in the twenty-first century,” indicating a “hiatus in global warming.”

I am open to evidence on the Global Warming issue and don’t necessarily consider myself a confirmed “skeptic” of the view that human activities are changing the climate, but I’m sure of this: Robust debate, full access to the facts, and freedom of inquiry are necessary for a healthy society, for an informed citizenry, and for sound public policy. Although the NGSS officially laud “open-mindedness, objectivity, skepticism . . . and honest and ethi-

cal reporting of findings,” the standards’ one-sided approach on Global Warming makes for bad science and threaten core values—freedom of speech and intellectual freedom—that undergird our nation.

But the NGSS do fit neatly within goals of NCSE and its partners at the Climate and Energy Literacy Summit. As Mark McCaffrey, programs and policy director of NCSE’s Climate Change Education Initiative, wrote in *The Earth Scientist* in 2012, it is the “duty” of educators to “cite the consensus of the scientific community on the reality of climate change” and to “not misrepresent the scientific consensus by suggesting that climate change is a matter of scientific controversy or by presenting ‘the other side’ as though it were scientifically credible.” He thus praises the NGSS, since “The potential is enormous for these proposed science standards to help improve how climate and global change are taught and advance civic science literacy.”

When NCSE gets involved with a local curriculum debate or lawsuits, its goal is almost always to always censor the viewpoints of dissenters. NCSE encourages this censorship not only in K-12 schools, but also in higher education. Indeed, NCSE has a history of supporting discrimination against those who hold minority viewpoints. Though NCSE is too politically astute to admit this outright, it believes that scientists who oppose the “consensus” should be denied academic freedom and prevented from advancing far within academia.

In the fight over Global Warming, NCSE will no doubt employ the same tactics it used in the evolution debate:

► NCSE has argued that a skeptical scientist “should not expect his colleagues to ignore his advocacy of a perspective that those in his field have overwhelmingly rejected.” For example, in 2010, Eugenie Scott defended the University of Kentucky after it denied a job to a physicist on the (incorrect) grounds that he was a “creationist,” stating: “It’s perfectly legitimate to discriminate against a

candidate based on whether that candidate’s scientific views are acceptable to the discipline.” Of course, the premise of Scott’s argument is that it should not be (her word) “acceptable” for scientists to disagree with the “consensus.”

► NCSE has encouraged censorship in the media. Eugenie Scott has formulated tips for scientists to help them avoid admitting weaknesses in evolutionary biology. NCSE also praised a prominent 2005 article by Chris Mooney and Matthew Nisbet in *Columbia Journalism Review* which urged news outlets to give diminished and hostile coverage to those who disagree with the “consensus” on evolution.

A very different view of the value of scientific debate was stated by Stanford education theorist Jonathan Osborne, who wrote in *Science* in 2010: “Critique is not, therefore, some peripheral feature of science, but rather it is core to its practice, and without argument and evaluation, the construction of reliable knowledge would be impossible.” Similarly, the late Professor Stephen Jay Gould, a prominent advocate of evolutionary theory, cautioned his colleagues, “Judgments based on scientific evidence, whether made in a laboratory or a courtroom, are undermined by a categorical refusal even to consider research or views that contradict someone’s notion of the prevailing ‘consensus.’”

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GreenNotes

The **Obama administration** announced, “On America’s path toward a clean energy future, solar power is an increasingly important building block. That’s why we installed solar panels on the roof of the **White House**; it’s a clear sign of our commitment to energy efficiency.” The administration claims that the solar array will provide 6.3 kilowatts of power when the sun is shining. On an average day, that works out to less than one-and-a-half percent of estimated White House electricity usage. That’s less than the percentage by which U.S. residential electricity usage typically increases in a year.

Being an environmentalist means never having to say you’re sorry. Prof. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan**, the future liberal Democratic U.S. Senator from **New York**, warned the **Nixon administration** in 1969 that Global Warming would put **Washington, D.C.**, and **New York City** under water by the year 2000. **Stanford** Prof. **Paul Ehrlich** wrote in 1970 that pesticides “may have already shortened by as much as a decade the life expectancy of every American born since 1946.” Prof. **Peter Gunter** of **North Texas State University** declared, “Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in **India** . . . By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of **Western Europe**, **North America**, and **Australia**, will be in famine.” **Al Gore** predicted that the **North Pole** ice cap would be gone by 2013.

Now comes the latest report from the Obama administration on Global Warming, which the report euphemistically refers to as “climate change” because no one disputes that the climate changes. (For example, there is universal agreement that New York City is no longer under a glacier.) **Michio Kaku** of the **City College of New York**, the science-explainer on “**CBS News This Morning**,” emphasized the report’s account of a recent increase in catastrophic weather—an increase that Warmers predicted, but which never actually occurred. Said Kaku: “This report is dramatically different from all previous reports on climate change. Previous reports talk about climate change as being in the future, maybe decades in the future. This report says, ‘uh-uh,’ it’s here and now. It has arrived. It’s a fact of life, costing perhaps hundreds of billions of dollars in property damage. People talk about 100-year storms, 100-year hurricanes, 100-year floods, heat waves and forest fires. . . . [P]eople’s homes are in danger.”

Who is Professor Kaku, the source of science information for CBS News? He’s been a board member of **WBAI**, which is the radical **Pacifica** radio station in New York City, and a board member of **Peace Action** (formerly **SANE/Freeze**), the leftist organization that opposed **President Reagan**’s efforts to defeat the **Soviet Union**. At the 1999 funeral of WBAI’s program director, where the deceased was praised as a “revolutionary” and a “comrade,” Kaku led the crowd in a chant of “The people, united, can never be defeated.”

Russian dictator **Vladimir Putin**, who called the breakup of the Soviet Union “the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th Century,” is getting some help in his efforts to dismember **Ukraine** and dominate **Europe**. About a quarter of the natural gas that warms the people of Europe comes from Russia, most of that gas running through Ukraine. Given the natural gas boom in the U.S., the result of the fracking revolution, American gas could help make it possible for Europeans to resist Putinist aggression. But environmentalist leader **Bill McKibben**, founder of the environmentalist group **350.org**, has attacked the development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export terminal in **Cove Point, Maryland**, and at least 20 other LNG facilities. He writes in **Politico** that, “like the **Keystone XL** pipeline for tar sands oil and the proposed export of dirty-burning coal through new terminals in the **Pacific Northwest**, this liquefied gas plan is bad in almost every way.”

Meanwhile, McKibben’s group leads the opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry **Canadian** oil to refineries in the U.S. Who benefits from this opposition? **Scott McKibben** of the **Canadian Free Press** wrote: “If the U.S. does not take full advantage of the Canadian oil sands resource, **China** certainly will to a greater and greater extent. In February 2013, the **Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation**, CNOOC, closed the \$15 billion acquisition of Canada’s **Nexen Oil Company**—a company with a significant stake in the **Alberta** oil sands. Most environmentalists think globally and must realize that delaying Keystone only gives China more clout in securing a larger portion of the oil sands. And then who wins? Certainly not **Mother Earth**, given China’s horrid environmental record.”

Wyoming has become the first state to reject K-12 “**Next Generation Science Standards**” that would require teachers to promote Global Warming beliefs in the classroom. **Ron Micheli**, president of the state board of education, said the board will review whether “we can’t get some standards that are Wyoming standards . . . we can all be proud of.” Twelve states have adopted the NGSS. [See the main article in this issue.]