

# Equal Time For Flat-Earth Science

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- 1 Paul Ellwanger, head of Citizens for Fairness in Education in South Carolina, has promoted a model creation/evolution bill to be introduced in state legislatures. My immediate reaction on seeing this bill was to rewrite it slightly. I preserved most of the creationist wording, but altered the bill to require teaching of flat-earth theory whenever conventional astronomy is taught. I sincerely believe that my bill should be introduced in every state legislature in which the creationist bill is introduced.
- 2 In fact, I hereby volunteer to write a flat-earth version of any creationist bill introduced anywhere, if only someone will introduce my version. The parallels between flat-earthism and creationism are numerous and precise. Literal interpretation of certain parts of the Bible is a motivating factor for modern flat-earthers, and they have an elaborate system of "scriptural science" just as do the creationists. The flat-earthers of 19th century England had a skilled corps of lecturers who preached and debated. Because opponents were frequently unprepared for the ingenious arguments of the Universal Zetetic Society (the flat-earth organization), the flat-earthers usually won their debates. Lecturers from the San Diego based Institute for Creation Research use the same debate tactics, and enjoy the same success.
- 3 My flat-earth bill is "zetetically" correct, and accurately describes flat-earth theory. It is not really a parody, as it's impossible to parody something ludicrous.
- 4 No doubt bills could also be drafted demanding equal time for astrology, Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science theory of disease, or Von Daniken's "ancient astronauts." This would be a useful pastime for specialists in these areas who, like me, want to make it plain to legislators and the public the absurdity of creationist legislation.
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- 7 Bill No.:  
Introduced by:  
Date:
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- 10 A Bill To Be Entitled  
*"The Balanced Treatment for Flat-Earth Science  
and Spherical-Earth Science Act"*
- 11 An Act to require balanced treatment of flat-earth science (Zetetic Astronomy) and conventional astronomy in public schools; to protect academic freedom by providing student choice; to ensure freedom of religious exercise; to guarantee freedom of belief and speech; to prevent establishment of religion; to prohibit religious instruction

concerning the shape of the earth; to bar discrimination on the basis of planar or spherical belief; to provide definitions and clarifications; to declare the legislative purpose and legislative findings of fact; to provide for severability of provisions; to provide for repeal of contrary laws; and to set forth an effective date.

12 Be it enacted by the Legislature:

13 *Section 1. Requirement for Balanced Treatment.* Public schools within this State shall give balanced treatment to flat-earth science and to conventional science. Balanced treatment to these two models shall be given in classroom lectures taken as a whole for each course, in library materials taken as a whole for the sciences and taken as a whole for the humanities, and in other educational programs in public schools, to the extent that such lectures, textbooks, library materials, or educational programs deal in any way with the subjects of the earth's form and figure, the sun, moon, planets and stars, the form and dimensions of the universe, and its recent creation.

14 *Section 2. Prohibition against Religious Instruction.* Treatment of either spherical-earth science or flat-earth science shall be limited to scientific evidences for each model and inferences from the scientific evidences, and must not include any religious instruction or references to religious writings.

15 *Section 3. Requirement for Nondiscrimination.* Public schools within this State, or their personnel, shall not discriminate, by reducing a grade of a student or by singling out and making public criticism, against any student who demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of both spherical science and flat-earth science and who accepts or rejects either model in whole or part.

16 *Section 4. Definitions.* As used in this Act:

17 (a) "Flat-earth science" (Zetetic Astronomy) means the scientific evidences for the earth's being an outstretched plane and inferences from those scientific evidences. Flat-earth science includes the scientific evidences and related inferences that indicate: (1) The earth is an outstretched plane; (2) The known, inhabited earth is approximately circular, with the north pole at the center and a 150 foot wall of ice at the southern limit (outer edge);

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20 (3) The earth floats on the waters of the Great Deep, and there is fire below those waters (sometimes called Hell); (4) The earth is covered by a dome which also rests on the waters of the Great Deep; (5) The sun and moon are 32 miles in diameter and circle the region of the equator at an altitude of about 1500 miles; (6) Eclipses of the moon are

caused by an unseen dark body passing in front of it; (7) The earth and universe were created about 4004 B. C.

- 21 (b) "Spherical science" means the scientific evidences for the sphericity of the earth and inferences from those scientific evidences. Spherical science includes the scientific evidences and related inferences that indicate: (1) The earth is a spinning ball; (2) The earth circles the sun, which is 93 million miles away; (3) Eclipses of the moon are caused by the earth's shadow; (4) Other planets are large bodies, some of them larger than the earth; (5) The earth itself is merely a minor planet of a minor star in an undistinguished galaxy; (6) The universe is billions of light years in extent; (7) The earth and universe are billions of years old.
- 22 (c) "Public schools" means public secondary and elementary schools.\
- 23 *Section 5. Clarifications.* This Act does not require or permit instruction in any religious doctrine or materials. This Act does not require any instruction in the subject of the shape of the earth, but simply requires instruction in both scientific models (of spherical-earth science and flat-earth science) if public schools choose to teach either. This Act does not require each individual textbook or library book to give balanced treatment to the models of spherical-earth science and flat-earth science; it does not require any school's books to be discarded. This Act does not require each individual classroom lecture in a course to give balanced treatment, but simply requires the lectures as a whole to give balanced treatment; it permits some lectures to present spherical-earth science and other lectures to present flat-earth science.
- 24 *Section 6. Legislative Declaration of Purpose.* This Legislature enacts this Act for public schools with the purposes of protecting academic freedom for students' differing values and beliefs; ensuring neutrality toward students' diverse religious convictions; ensuring freedom of religious exercise for students and their parents; guaranteeing freedom of belief and speech for students; preventing establishment of Theologically Liberal, Humanist, Non-theist, or Atheist religions; preventing discrimination against students on the basis of their personal beliefs concerning the shape of the earth; and assisting students in their search for truth. This Legislature does not have the purpose of causing instruction in religious concepts or making an establishment of religion
- 25 *Section 7. Legislative Findings of Fact.* This Legislature finds that:
- 26 (a) The subject of the form, figure, and origin of the earth and universe is treated within many public school courses, such as general science, earth science, physics, astronomy, history, philosophy and social studies.

- 29 (b) Only spherical-earth science is presented to students in virtually all of those courses that discuss the shape and origin of the earth. Public schools generally censor flat-earth science and evidence contrary to the spinning ball theory.
- 30 (c) The spherical theory is not an unquestionable fact of science, because it cannot be proved beyond a doubt, and because it has not been accepted by some scientists.
- 31 (d) The spherical-earth theory is contrary to the religious convictions or moral values of some students and parents, including individuals of many different religious faiths and with diverse moral values and philosophical beliefs.
- 32 (e) Public school presentation of only spherical-earth science without any alternative model of the earth abridges the United States Constitution's protections of freedom of religious exercise and of freedom of belief and speech for students and parents, because it undermines their religious convictions and moral or philosophical values, compels their unconscionable professions of belief, and hinders religious training and moral training by parents.
- 33 (f) Public school presentation of only spherical-earth science furthermore abridges the Constitution's prohibition against the establishment of religion, because it produces hostility toward many Theistic religions and brings preference to Theological Liberalism, Humanism, Non-theistic religions, and Atheism, in that these religious faiths generally include a religious belief in a spherical earth
- 34 (g) Public school instruction in only the spherical theory also violates the principle of academic freedom, because it denies students a choice between scientific models and instead indoctrinates them in spherical-earth science alone.
- 35 (h) Presentation of only one model rather than alternative scientific models of the earth's shape is not required by any compelling interest of the State, and exemption of such students from a course or class presenting only the spherical theory of the earth does not provide an adequate remedy because of teacher influence and student pressure to remain in that course or class.
- 36 (i) Attendance of those students who are at public schools is compelled by law, and school taxes from their parents and other citizens are mandated by law
- 37 (j) Zetetic Astronomy (flat-earth science) is an alternative model of the earth which can be presented from a strictly scientific standpoint without any religious doctrine just as spherical-earth science can, because some scientists have concluded that scientific data best support flat-earth science and because scientific evidences and inferences have been presented for flat-earth science.

38 (k) Public school presentation of both spherical-earth and flat-earth theories would not violate the Constitution's prohibition against establishment of religion, because it would involve presentation of the scientific evidences and related inferences for each model rather than any religious instruction.

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41 (l) Most citizens, whatever their religious beliefs about the shape of the earth, favor balanced treatment in public schools of alternative models of the earth's shape for better guiding students in their search for knowledge, and they favor a neutral approach toward subjects affecting the religious and moral and philosophical convictions of students.

42 *Section 8. Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the "Balanced Treatment for Flat-Earth Science and Spherical-Earth Science Act."

43 *Section 9. Severability of Provisions.* If any provision of this Act is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions that can be applied in the absence of the invalidated provisions, and the provisions of this Act are declared to be severable.

44 *Section 10. Repeal of Contrary Laws.* All State laws or parts of State laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

45 *Section 11. Effective Date.* The requirement of the Act shall be met by and may be met before the beginning of the next school year if that is more than six months from the date of enactment, or otherwise one year after the beginning of the next school year, and in all subsequent school years.

46 About the Author(s):

47 *Bob Schadewald is a free-lance science writer, specializing in the off-beat. He has spent five years doing research on the history of the flat-earth movement and three years researching the creationists.*

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48 *This version might differ slightly from the print publication.*

49 < Why Creationism Should Not Be Taught As Science up How Not To Conduct A Panel On Evolution And Creation >

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