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Education
Question and Answers
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Q: What is the Administration's position on the Kansas Board of Education's decision not to teach evolution in schools?

A: While the federal government has a significant role to play in ensuring that all our children have access to the high-quality education they deserve, curriculum decisions are appropriately made on a state and local level.

Q: Has the President asked the Department of Education to examine the issue of teaching evolution?

A: The Department is prohibited by law from mandating curriculum. The Department of Education Organization Act says that "No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school or school system..." (Section 103 B 20 US Code 3403 (b)).

Q: But doesn't the Administration comment regularly on what children should learn in school, e.g. reading and math?

A: The federal government plays a critical leadership role in encouraging schools to set high standards for all students – including core academic areas such as reading, math and science – and to support state and local efforts to ensure that students reach high standards. These efforts help ensure that schools focus on results and that all students have the academic preparation needed for success. However, the federal government is not involved in determining the specific content of those standards or in deciding exactly how or what students should be taught. For example, the Administration has encouraged states and school districts to help all children learn to read well and independently by the end of the third grade, but it is up to them to choose the appropriate curriculum and instructional strategy to reach that goal.

Q: Does the President support the inclusion of evolution in state science standards?

A: Again, the President believes, as he did when he was a governor, that states and localities have primary responsibility for education and must have the flexibility to decide what to teach and how to teach it. He also feels strongly, however, that our children need an educational environment that promotes scientific and intellectual inquiry. The National Academy of Sciences, in their report *Science*

and Creationism, has laid out the compelling scientific evidence supporting the theory of evolution, and the judgment of these experts deserves great weight.

Q: Do the Administration's "Guidelines for Religious Freedom" address this issue?

A: The issue decided by the Kansas Board is one of science curriculum, not one of religious freedom or expression.