



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

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## For Immediate Release

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# TEXAS SENATE VOTES AGAINST THE NOMINATION OF DON MCLEROY TO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*"Right now, Texas needs strong education leadership, particularly in math and science to make us competitive in the 21st Century. Don McLeroy is not qualified to serve as chairman of such an important board as the State Board of Education. His views on creationism do not square with science; his views on reading do not square with evidence; his views on the future of education in Texas do not square with a diverse state seeking education excellence."*

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**AUSTIN** - Today, the Texas Senate voted against the nomination of Don McLeroy as chairman of the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE). Confirmation of McLeroy would have put Texas on the path to a less educated workforce.

Since McLeroy became chair of the board, it has become divided and deeply dysfunctional. More than a dozen newspapers, including the [New York Times](#) and [Washington Post](#), have written editorials against decisions made by the board under McLeroy's leadership. McLeroy disregarded the work of seasoned educators and experts, and defied the Legislature's intent for school curriculum. McLeroy would have harmed efforts to make our state competitive in a 21st Century economy.

"Right now, Texas needs strong education leadership, particularly in math and science to make us competitive in the 21st Century," Senator Shapleigh said. "Don McLeroy is not qualified to serve as chairman of such an important board as the State Board of Education. His views on creationism do not square with science; his views on reading do not square with evidence; his views on the future of education in Texas do not square with a diverse state seeking education excellence."

This year, McLeroy publicly [endorsed a book](#) that characterizes parents who want their children to learn about evolution as "monsters," scientists as "atheists," and pastors who teach that there is no conflict between science and religion as "morons."

- More -

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Additionally, when discussing why students should not be reading the works of authors from different countries, [McLeroy stated](#), "you really don't want Chinese books with a bunch of crazy Chinese words in them," adding that some words—such as chow mein—might be useful.

This year, McLeroy refused to allow science experts to testify on proposed changes to public school science standards which challenged established science on evolution and climate change. McLeroy said it was his duty to "[stand up to these experts](#)." He has been stated as saying "[scientific consensus means nothing](#)" and "[the evidence \[for human contributions to global warming\] is a bunch of 'hoey.'](#)"

In 1997, Chairman McLeroy defied the clear intent of the Legislature when adopting vague standards with regard to Bible courses in Texas schools.

The Texas Legislature passed [H.B. 1287](#) in the 80th Legislative Session, which provided for a public school elective course on Bible study. In order to provide safeguards to protect the religious freedom of students, the House Public Education Committee amended the bill, requiring that the board adopt specific curriculum standards detailing what students should be learning in those classes.

On May 16, 2008, the Chairman Rob Eissler (R- The Woodlands) and two members of the committee [wrote to the board in opposition](#) to vague curriculum standards they were considering, stating that "the Committee fully intended for the board to adopt detailed, content-specific curricula for courses taught under the authority of [[H.B. 1287](#)]." McLeroy still adopted the board's vague standards.

The Legislature has responded this session with at least a dozen bills that would either strip elements of the board's authority, subject the board's activities to heightened legislative scrutiny or require more transparency of the board's activities.

Senator Shapleigh previously voted against McLeroy's confirmation in the Senate Committee on Nominations. Today, the Senate voted 11 nays and 19 ayes on McLeroy's nomination. Since McLeroy needed a two-thirds vote to be confirmed, his confirmation failed.

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