



BARBARA CARGILL'S TROUBLING RECORD ON THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Barbara Cargill was first elected to represent State Board of Education District 8 in November 2004. She became board chair by appointment of Gov. Rick Perry in July 2011. She has never been confirmed by the Texas Senate.

The next chair of the State Board of Education will guide the board through two important – and historically controversial – textbook adoptions: science (2013) and social studies (2014). Ms. Cargill's record on those subjects raises questions about her ability to oversee the board during these highly charged deliberations.

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— Barbara Cargill
Jan. 31, 2013

SCIENCE: Cargill has a consistent record of attacking established science, particularly the science of evolution, and using her position on the SBOE to push her ideological opinions over the recommendations of the science community.

- As recently as Jan. 31, 2013, one day before she was reappointed by Gov. Perry for a second term as chair, Cargill testified at a hearing of the Senate Education Committee that students should be taught another side to the theory of evolution:

“Our intent, as far as theories with the [curriculum standards], was to teach all sides of scientific explanations.... But when I went on [to the CSCOPE website] last night, I couldn't see anything that might be seen as another side to the theory of evolution.”ⁱ

- Cargill continues to stand by flawed science standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 2009. Even after the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute gave Texas standards a “C” gradeⁱⁱ, Cargill responded to the grade by stating:

“We look forward to continuing to work with Texas teachers to bring the best instruction to the classroom with our excellent science standards.”ⁱⁱⁱ

- During the 2009 debate on science curriculum standards, Cargill led a successful effort to amend science standards to remove the scientific consensus of the age of the universe. Cargill's motion:

“(A) evaluate the evidence concerning the Big Bang model, such as red shift and cosmic microwave background radiation, and ~~the concept of an expanding universe that originated about 14 billion years ago, current theories of the evolution of the universe including estimates for the age of the universe; and~~^{iv}

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SOCIAL STUDIES: Cargill played a prominent role in the contentious revision to the social studies curriculum standards in 2010, including support for some of the most controversial revisions.

- The 2010 revision to Texas' social studies standards has been harshly criticized from all corners. The conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute gave the standards a "D," calling them a "political distortion" with "misrepresentations at every turn."^v Even the Social Studies Faculty Collaborative – a project of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board – concluded the standards fail to prepare Texas students for college.^{vi} Yet Cargill continues to stand by, even praise, the standards:

"I fully support the recently adopted social studies curriculum standards."^{vii}

- Cargill directly contributed to the ideologically charged atmosphere by appointing Peter Marshall, an evangelical minister from Massachusetts with no experience as a teacher or any advanced degree in history or the social sciences, as her "expert" curriculum reviewer. Among many controversial recommendations he made, Marshall called for the removal of Cesar Chavez from a standard on citizenship, arguing Chavez was not a good role model for students.^{viii} Cargill has subsequently opposed all efforts to establish rigorous qualifications for experts who advise the board on curriculum standards.

LEADERSHIP AS CHAIR: Cargill has continued to stoke the divisive, culture-war politics that have consumed the board in recent years, rather than focusing the board on important education issues.

- Days after being appointed as chair in 2011, Cargill divisively suggested that even some of the 11 Republicans on the board weren't "true conservative Christians":

"Right now there are six true conservative Christians on the board."^{ix}

- Cargill has also been caught applying a political litmus test for educators who want to get involved at the state board. During the social studies standards debate in 2009, Cargill questioned an educator from a Texas university who applied to serve on a curriculum writing team:

"Would you consider yourself a conservative when it comes to patriotism, the constitution, the heritage of our forefathers, etc?"^x

ⁱ "Told You So: Texas Ed Board Chair Wants Science Textbooks to Teach 'Another Side' on Evolution." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. *TFN Insider*, <http://tfn.org/anotherside>

ⁱⁱ "The State of State Science Standards 2012." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. Thomas B. Fordham Institute, <http://bit.ly/VPig6a>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Texas gets a 'C' for school science courses." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. *Houston Chronicle*, <http://bit.ly/ya8jaQ>

^{iv} Texas State Board of Education Committee of the Full Board, March 26, 2009. Minutes available at: <http://bit.ly/126LZDx>

^v "The State of State U.S. History Standards 2011." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. Thomas B. Fordham Institute, <http://bit.ly/geSxcE>

^{vi} "Bridging the Gap Between K-12 and College Readiness Standards in Texas: Recommendations for U.S. History, 2012." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. Higher Education Coordinating Board, <http://www.tfn.org/higheredboard>

^{vii} "Report: Social Studies Guidelines Not Aligned With College Standards." Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. *KUT News*, <http://bit.ly/tyCHXM>

^{viii} "Help Review the Social Studies 'Experts.'" Retrieved Feb. 8, 2013. *TFN Insider*, <http://tfn.org/socialstudiesexperts>

^{ix} "State Board of Education Chair's 'Christian' Remark Draws Fire." Retrieved Feb. 11, 2013. *KUT News*, <http://bit.ly/UYa1id>

^x "Conservative history idea for state ed slammed." Retrieved Feb. 11, 2013. *San Antonio Express-News*, <http://bit.ly/VPmpkE>