



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

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## **SENATOR SHAPLEIGH RELEASES STATEMENT ON RICK PERRY'S NOMINATION OF SBOE CHAIRMAN DON MCLEROY**

### **SENATOR SHAPLEIGH PLANS TO SEVER NOMINATION, BRING CONFIRMATION DEBATE BEFORE FULL SENATE**

*"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 (SBOE). 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, after testimony from current Chairman of the Texas State Board of Education Don McLeroy in the Senate Committee on Nominations, Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) issued the following statement:

Don McLeroy is not qualified to serve as chairman of such an important board as the State Board of Education (SBOE). 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.

Here are a few of his quotes over the years on various topics:

#### **Disregarding research and expertise**

"I disagree with all these experts. Somebody has to stand up to these experts."

- [SBOE meeting](#), March 27, 2009, on the debate over evolution

"Scientific consensus means nothing."

- [San Francisco Examiner](#), March 30, 2009, on the debate over evolution

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“Conservatives like me think the evidence (for human contributions to global warming) is a bunch of ‘hooy.’”

- [Austin American-Statesman](#), March 28, 2009, during the debate on science standards

### **On religion and science**

“The old definition was inferior in that it undermined both the philosophy of the naturalist and the supernaturalist. By circular reasoning, the naturalist was prevented from using science to prove that ‘nature is all there is,’ and the supernaturalist was prevented from offering supernatural hypotheses. With the new definition, both the naturalist and the supernaturalist are free to make ‘testable’ explanations. The debate can now shift from ‘Is it science?’ to ‘Is it testable?’”

- [Austin American-Statesman](#), March 25, 2009, arguing for a redefinition of science to include supernatural explanations

“In critiquing the National Academy of Science’s (NAS) missionary evolution tract—Science, Evolution and Creationism, 2008, he identifies their theft of true science by their intentional neglect of other valid scientific possibilities. Then, using NAS’s own statements, he demonstrates that the great ‘process’ of evolution—natural selection—is nothing more than a figure of speech.”

- [February 1, 2009](#), endorsing 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”

“When I became a Christian, it was whole-hearted. I was totally convinced the biblical principles were right, and I was totally convinced that it could accurate scientifically.”

- [Austin American Statesman](#), March 8, 2009, oddly discussing why his desire to water down public school instruction about evolution isn’t about his religious beliefs

“If evolution is development of life through unguided natural processes, how can we be made in the image of God? How can humans be worth anything?”

- [Texas Observer](#), February 20, 2009, rejecting suggestions that science and religion are not in conflict with each other

“There were only the four really conservative, orthodox Christians on the board (who) were the only ones who were willing to stand up to the textbooks and say that they don’t present the weaknesses of evolution. . . . And the more I look back on it, I believe if we would have challenged the naturalistic assumptions that nature is all there is with our fellow board members and challenged these people that were talking about it a little bit that brought up testimony, possibly we would have gotten a few more votes because a lot of these dear friends of mine on the State Board of Education are good, strong Christians that are active in Young Life and other activities. But they were able to totally not even worry about the fact that evolution’s assumption that nature is all there is in total conflict with the way they live there life.”

- [Lecture at Grace Bible Church in Bryan](#), July 2005, in which Dr. McLeroy discusses the state board’s adoption of biology textbooks in 2003

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## On reading and language arts

“What good does it do to put a Chinese story in an English book? You learn all these Chinese words, OK. That's not going to help you master ... English. So you really don't want Chinese books with a bunch of crazy Chinese words in them. Why should you take a child's time trying to learn a word that they'll never ever use again?” He added that some words — such as chow mein — might be useful.

- [\*San Antonio Express-News\*](#), March 21, 2008, discussing why language arts students shouldn't be reading the works of authors from different countries

SBOE member Mary Helen Berlanga has also [called on Governor Perry to remove Don McLeroy](#), stating that since he took over as chairman "it has been a disaster. Both, his positions on the English Language Arts and Reading Document (ELAR) and his attitude towards our teachers have been very offensive. Many of our state representatives' and senators' comments have been ignored and they too are offended. You cannot afford to have Don McLeroy in such an important position in our state."

During the 81st session, [at least fifteen bills](#) have been filed by Republicans and Democrats alike to limit or eliminate SBOE authority over textbooks and curriculum.

In the Senate, I will sever his name from consideration and seek to block his nomination as SBOE chairman. His term has served to divide Texas and put us onto a path to a less educated workforce.

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 lead in education.

### ***Related documents:***

- [Opinion by Attorney General Dan Morales regarding the authority of the SBOE to adopt a rule prescribing the content of state-funded textbooks for use in public schools. \(November 21, 1996\)](#)
- [Opinion by Attorney General Greg Abbott regarding the authority of the SBOE to adopt a rule requiring school textbooks to meet general textbook content standards as a condition of the board's approval. \(September 18, 2006\)](#)
- [Letter from SBOE member Mary Helen Berlanga requesting removal for Don McLeroy as board chairman. \(May 20, 2008\)](#)
- [Letter from Texas State Representatives Rob Eissler, Scott Hochberg and Diane Patrick urging the SBOE to reject vague TEKS proposed by the board for elective courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament under HB 1287. \(May 16, 2008\)](#)

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