

VIEWPOINT

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REPAYING OUR DEBT

Job training for veterans should be business priority



Jonathan Adelstein
Seven decades ago, when World War II veterans came home, President Truman led our parents and grandparents in meeting America's moral obligation through the GI Bill, a newly created Veterans Administration and vastly strengthened health-care services.

Now it's time for our generation to repay the debt we owe our more recent military veterans, who have sacrificed so much on our behalf.

The wireless infrastructure industry – the companies and people whose antennas and facilities keep smartphones, laptops and tablets connected – wants to do our part.

Ten months ago, the trade group I head, PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association, joined government, military, veteran and corporate leaders at the White House to launch a career-training program called Warriors4Wireless. PCIA and Warriors4Wireless have spearheaded training programs at Aiken (S.C.) Technical College and at Virginia State University. The programs emphasize technical and safety training, much of it conducted by longtime wireless infrastructure workers.

Aiken is sending veteran-trainees out into the work force. They've been snapped up by our growing industry. All graduates obtain a technical certificate, which will help them find work in any state across the country.

The demand for mobile data is so intense that thousands of wireless infrastructure jobs around the country go unfilled because workers have not been adequately trained. There is nobody better positioned or more deserving to fill them than our veterans.

Jonathan Adelstein is chief executive and president of PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association and can be reached at (703) 739-0300. If you or your business would like to lend a hand in training veterans for careers in wireless infrastructure, please contact Phil Larsen, PCIA's director of education and training at phil.larsen@pcia.com.

FAITH-BASED APPROACH TO BIOLOGY

In this textbook, dogma trumps science

Dr. William Snider, director of the Neuroscience Center at the UNC School of Medicine, contrasts a standard high school biology text, Ken Miller and Joe Levine, *Biology, with one that is being used by private and religious schools in the state, Biology, God's Living Creation*, published by A Beka Book. In his analysis, excerpted below, he questions whether the latter text is appropriate for schools whose students are eligible for vouchers funded by the state government. The views are his own and he does not speak for the university. He can be reached at william_snider@med.unc.edu or (919) 843-8623.

Probably the biggest problem with the A Beka book is that religious teachings are interspersed in the text throughout. In several chapters, there are sentences like:

- ▶ “Modern science was built on biblical principles.”
- ▶ “The Bible is very important to the scientist because it records facts about the history and future of the universe that the scientist would otherwise not know.”
- ▶ DNA is the “Master’s plan for controlling and perpetuating His living creation on earth.”

I see little reason for science and religion to be in conflict, but virtually all scientists and professional educators would agree that religious teachings do not have a place in science textbooks.

As one might imagine, the treatment of evolution could not be more different in the two texts. The theory of evolution is a central organizing principle of modern biology. Without getting into sterile arguments about “theories” versus “facts” in science,

virtually all science educators agree that it is important for biology students to be introduced to evolutionary theory.

The A Beka chapter on evolution is an attack on the theory as a “retreat from science.” In the preface, the authors state: “Since the day that Darwinism invaded the classroom, God’s glory has been hidden from students.” The chapter is a major disservice to biology students.



William Snider

For instance:
▶ The first problem is not clearly stating the theory of evolution, thus setting up a straw man. In much of the chapter, it is stated or implied that the theory of evolution fails because it doesn’t explain the origin of the earliest living things. The central tenets of the theory of evolution do not deal with the origin of life.

▶ A second problem is mixing in religious commentary that has no place in a biology text. Statements that “Many varieties of canines have developed from a single pair of canines that left the ark,” “All the diversity we see in the human race today comes from an original couple” and that “Man is created in the image of God” are not arguments that can be used against evolutionary theory, nor do they teach students biology.

▶ A third problem is misinformation on multiple points. Stating the Earth is “relatively young” when scientists approximate the age of the earth as 4.5 billion years is misinformation that is harmful to students. The statement that radiometric dating is an unreliable method is simply incorrect. For example, dates determined by

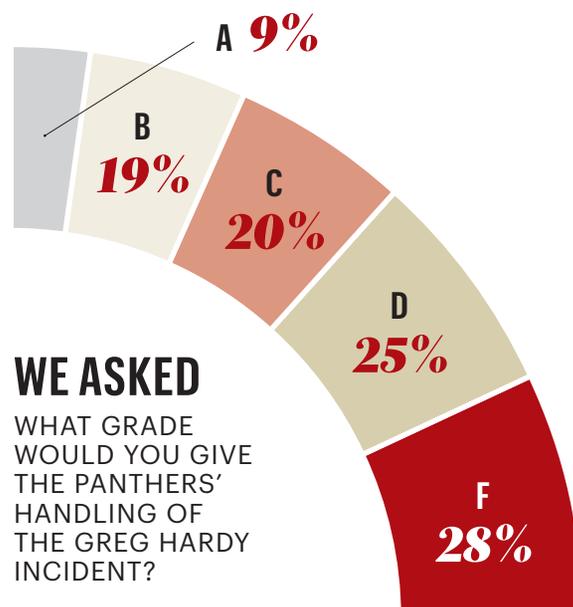
radiocarbon dating have frequently been verified by other methods.

▶ A fourth problem is misrepresentation of the fossil record. Although a complicated issue, virtually all biologists and paleontologists agree that there is a progression from simple to complex organisms through the various eras of the earth’s history. Biologists agree that if convincing evidence were shown of a species out of temporal order, this would be a powerful argument against evolution, but no such examples have been found. In the A Beka book, the authors simply say that the ordering of the fossil record is flawed with no evidence to support the statement.

▶ A final issue is not pointing out the ways that evolutionary theory is central to modern biology. A theory providing an explanation for the fossil record, that proposes a mechanism for how species can change over time and how new species can appear, that is strongly validated by the discovery of DNA and commonality among genome sequences, and that can be seen in operation today in the appearance of drug-resistant bacteria is a powerful organizing principle. Students using the A Beka book are deprived of the opportunity to learn what biology students (and potential competitors for future jobs) all over the world are learning and thus placed at a major disadvantage.

The A Beka text as a central component of a high school biology curriculum would be suspect if it were evaluated by a state board of education. It is difficult to envision the justification for using state funds to support curricula that do not prepare students for the modern workplace.

▶ BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

WILL YOU BUY THE BIGGER, FASTER IPHONE 6 OR IPHONE 6 PLUS?

▶ WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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