

Poole Bills ^[1]

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See also: [Teaching of Evolution](#) ^[2]

The [Poole Bills](#) ^[3], also called "Poole Monkey Bills," were a series of attempts in the 1920s by [General Assembly](#) ^[4] member [D. Scott Poole](#) ^[5] to outlaw the teaching of evolution in state-supported schools. If the Poole Bill were passed, it would have required that all teachers in the state sign a pledge stating that they believed "in the being of Almighty God" and ensured a prison sentence for any teacher convicted of teaching evolution in a state school.

Inspired by actions of the Tennessee legislature that precipitated the infamous [Scopes Trial](#) ^[6] of 1920, and backed by fundamentalist forces centered around a committee of 100 churchmen of the North Carolina Presbyterian Synod, Poole introduced his first bill in 1925 and saw it defeated by a narrow margin. In February 1927 Poole's bill was reintroduced and defeated in committee by a margin of 25 to 11 after a rousing speech by [Paul J. Ranson](#) ^[7], a law student at the [University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill](#) ^[8]. Victory for the bill's opponents was widely attributed to some presentations and debates in [Charlotte](#) ^[9] sponsored by former students of [Horace Williams](#) ^[10] (1858-1940), the controversial philosophy professor at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Additional Resources:

The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina in the 1920's, UNC Libraries: <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/evolution/introduction> ^[11]

Primary Sources: <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/evolution/primarysources> ^[12]

Glossary: <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/evolution/glossary> ^[13]

References:

"Will Compromise Bill on Evolution Be Introduced?" *The Concord Daily Tribune*, February 4, 1927. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073201/1927-02-04/ed-1/seq-1/> ^[14]

Linder, Suzanne Cameron. "William Louis Poteat and the Evolution Controversy." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 40, no. 2 (1963): 135–57. <https://login.proxy171.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable...> ^[15]

Subjects:

[Law and legal history](#) ^[16]

[N.C. Industrial Revolution \(1900-1929\)](#) ^[17]

[Religion](#) ^[18]

Authors:

[Mills, Jerry Leath](#) ^[19]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[20]

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Links

^[1] <https://ncpedia.org/poole-bills> ^[2] <https://ncpedia.org/evolution-teaching> ^[3] <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/poolebill.html> ^[4] <https://ncpedia.org/general-assembly> ^[5] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/poole-david-scott> ^[6] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/08/2/l_082_01.html ^[7] <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/05216/> ^[8] <https://ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> ^[9] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/charlotte> ^[10] http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/Williams, Henry_Horace.html ^[11] <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/evolution/introduction> ^[12] <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/primarysources.html> ^[13] <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/glossary.html> ^[14] <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073201/1927-02-04/ed-1/seq-1/> ^[15] <https://login.proxy171.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/23517452> ^[16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/laws> ^[17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/nc-industrial-rev> ^[18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/religion> ^[19] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/mills-jerry-leath> ^[20] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->