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Newly Released Internal Documents Indicate Former TEA Official Chris Comer Resigned Over Misconduct and Insubordination Issues--Not Over Her Views on Evolution

Documents Contradict Prior Media Reports and Darwinists' Spin

AUSTIN, TEXAS--During the past year, former Texas Education Agency (TEA) official Chris Corner has become the darling of pro-evolution Darwinists groups who allege she was fired in 2007 because she opposed creationism or supported evolution. Corner is now suing the TEA, claiming that she was terminated in violation of the Constitution. But internal government documents recently obtained by TBSE under Texas' Public Information Act (PIA), raise serious questions about the accuracy of previous accounts of Corner's departure from the TEA.

Based on a review of these internal agency documents, TBSE observes that it appears that Ms. Corner was not fired, but resigned after a history of disciplinary issues. If Darwinists want to create a scandal and invent a martyr for their cause, they appear to have picked the wrong case. Though there was at least one positive reference in the newly released personnel file, the documents reveal numerous problems including:

- Multiple findings of "insubordination" and "misconduct."
- Reference to possible violation of the Texas Penal Code over payments made to Corner from entities receiving TEA money under contracts she administered.
- Corner received three separate disciplinary letters spanning at least eight separate incidents. <u>Seven of</u> <u>these eight incidents had nothing to do with evolution.</u>
- Corner had been disciplined and charged with "insubordination" because she repeatedly disregarded the TEA's strict rule that staff must remain neutral and silent regarding unsettled curricular questions. Corner was charged with insubordination for violating this rule <u>on issues that had nothing to do with evolution</u>. In her last year alone at the TEA, Corner was found by superiors to be guilty of "insubordination" or "misconduct" on three separate occasions, including one incident where she disparaged the TEA leadership publicly.

According to the new documents, Corner clearly resigned because her work performance had been unsatisfactory. The notion that the TEA is a hotbed of creationist activity is laughable to anyone who has worked with them. Their professional staff is studiously neutral on policy issues, which are the realm of the legislature, the SBOE, and the Governor's office.

Papers including the *New York Times* have printed numerous articles casting Corner as a victim, but according to another TEA employee, no one except Corner's attorney has filed PIA requests to uncover the truth about this case. Why is that? As a public service, TBSE is posting the TEA documents on www.strengthsandweaknesses.org.

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Texans for Better Science Education – <u>www.strengthsandweaknesses.org</u> *Teach more evolution, not less*—strengths and weaknesses—and let the fittest theories survive.