

**For Immediate Release
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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 Comer has become the darling of pro-evolution Darwinists groups who allege she was fired in 2007 because she opposed creationism or supported evolution. Comer 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 Comer's departure from the TEA," says TBSE's Mark Ramsey.

Based on a review of these internal agency documents, Ramsey observes that "it appears that Ms. Comer 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 Comer from entities receiving TEA money under contracts she administered.
- Comer received three separate disciplinary letters spanning at least eight separate incidents. *Seven of these eight incidents had nothing to do with evolution.*
- Comer 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. Comer was charged with insubordination for violating this rule *on issues that had nothing to do with evolution.* In her last year alone at the TEA, Comer 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, Comer clearly resigned because her work performance had been unsatisfactory. Ramsey added that "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 Comer as a victim, but according to another TEA employee, no one except Comer'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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Teach more evolution, not less—strengths and weaknesses—and let the fittest theories survive.*