



A Message to the NABT Community: NABT Statement on 2021 Conference in Georgia

April 26, 2020 - Since late March, an estimated 361 bills with restrictive voting provisions have been introduced in 47 states ([Brennan Center for Justice, 2021](#)). [SB202](#) in Georgia is one such bill that has recently become law. While NABT would not usually comment on specific voter legislation, we are compelled to do so in this instance.

[The National Association of Biology Teachers](#) recognizes how powerful the voice of a local constituent can be, and we routinely speak on behalf of our members to lend support or opposition to measures that directly affect the teaching of biology and life science. NABT advocates for more voices to participate in our civic process, not fewer.

The right of eligible persons to vote in free and fair elections is a central tenet of American democracy and NABT strongly opposes efforts to restrict access to voting.

The [2021 NABT Professional Development Conference](#) is scheduled from November 11th - 14th in Atlanta. As the full implications of Georgia's new voting laws become apparent, there have been calls to withhold projects and events in the state. Calls to limit cancellations have been equally prevalent, as many of the communities negatively impacted by SB202 will suffer disproportionately from boycotts.

NABT's foremost responsibility is to advance our mission to empower educators to provide the best possible biology and life science education for all students. We promote that mission by designing professional development that helps teachers better address the myriad of challenges they face. NABT and our members have experience delivering effective learning in an online setting. However, there is no substitute for the community engagement and enrichment that can only happen when people convene in person.

Denying teachers - and the communities they serve - the educational and economic benefits of an NABT Conference does not advance our mission. Nor does it bring additional attention to the impacts of SB202.

For these reasons and more, the NABT Board of Directors has voted unanimously to keep our conference in Atlanta. In addition to providing high-quality sessions focused on biology education, NABT will also provide a venue and educational resources to help participants learn effective strategies that support civic engagement at the local, state, and national levels. This decision should not be seen as a political stance, as we believe there is nothing controversial about exercising the right to vote.

NABT will continue to monitor developments as we prepare to welcome a diverse group of biology and life science teachers to Atlanta in November. We hope you will join us to learn and lead together.

Sincerely,

Julie Angle, Ph.D.
NABT President

Sharon Gusky
NABT Past-President

Chris Monsour
NABT President-Elect

Steven D. Christenson, Ph.D.
NABT Secretary/Treasurer

Cindy Gay
NABT Director-at-Large

Anna Hiatt, Ph.D.
NABT Director-at-Large

Kevin English
NABT Director/Coordinator

Madelene Loftin
NABT Director/Coordinator

Jaclyn Reeves-Pepin
NABT Executive Director