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## LETTERS

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### In controversy over evolution, Steves rule

In editorializing recently about the validity of evolutionary science, the *News* noted that "thousands" of research scientists have contributed to Darwinian theory while "scarcely any" support intelligent design. A letter writer then responded by calling attention to the Discovery Institute's list of 400-plus experts who have expressed doubts about Darwinian theory and who, presumably, support design.

These competing numbers claims can be put in perspective by putting them to the "Steves test" in which the Discovery Institute's list of scientists with the name Steve are compared with the number of Steves on the National Center for Science Education's list of 600-plus scientists supporting Darwinism (at [www.ncseweb.org](http://www.ncseweb.org)).

If the name Steve occurs in the same 1 percent frequency among scientists as it does in the general population, then for every 400 scientists who reject Darwinian theory there are 60,000 scientists who support it. While the NCSE's roster of Steves is steadily increasing, *The Seattle Times* has recently reported that the Discovery Institute's list is shrinking.

If imparting basic scientific literacy is a goal of public education (and given the time and resource constraints within which our K-12 teachers struggle), can anyone really believe, in light of these comparative

data, that there's a serious "debate" here that's worth legitimizing in science class?

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