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**TEXTBOOK SELECTION PROCESS ATTACKED BY YET ANOTHER STEALTH CREATIONISM BILL**

***HB 580 guts oversight of textbook adoption & use of taxpayer funds***

**Baton Rouge, LA, June 13, 2011**

After failing last year to block approval of new biology textbooks by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), supporters of the Louisiana Science Education Act (LSEA) are now backing HB 580, a stealth creationism bill that amounts to an end run around BESE. It also expands the reach of the LSEA by removing from current law crucial protections that ensure quality science education materials. The Louisiana Coalition for Science (LCFS) urges the Senate to reject this bill. (See HB 580 at [www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/byinst.asp?sessionid=11RS&billid=HB580&doctype=ALL](http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/byinst.asp?sessionid=11RS&billid=HB580&doctype=ALL).)

HB 580 contains the following provisions:

- (1) Replaces BESE's power to "prescribe and adopt" textbooks and instructional materials with the power merely to "recommend." This will gut the board's power to protect the quality of science textbooks and learning materials. Students could end up using substandard materials that teach pseudoscience.
- (2) Allows local school boards to adopt and purchase — at taxpayer expense — textbooks and other materials that are **not** on the state list, without proper screening by scientists, educators, and curriculum experts, and with **no** spending limits. This blank check for bogus materials comes during a severe recession when schools face stiff budget cuts and teacher layoffs.
- (3) Eliminates the Department of Education's crucial role in (a) screening and reviewing textbooks and instructional materials to ensure their quality and (b) assuring that textbook adoption committees are composed of properly qualified members, as currently provided for under current law.

An analysis of the bill is available at [http://lasciencecoalition.org/docs/LCFS\\_Analysis\\_HB\\_580\\_6.13.11.pdf](http://lasciencecoalition.org/docs/LCFS_Analysis_HB_580_6.13.11.pdf).

Factors surrounding the introduction of this unnecessary bill raise additional red flags:

- HB 580 is among "Bills of Interest" that the Louisiana Family Forum (LFF) is backing through its lobbying arm, Louisiana Family Forum Action. The LFF wrote and promoted the LSEA in 2008. The LFF also tried aggressively but unsuccessfully to block approval of new biology textbooks in 2010.
- The bill's sponsor, Rep. Frank Hoffmann (District 15, West Monroe), promoted a creationist "academic freedom" policy as Asst. Supt. of Education in Ouachita Parish in 2006. In 2008, he introduced a companion bill to the LSEA, which he shepherded through the House of Representatives. As a member of the Textbook/Media/Library Advisory council last year, he voted against the new biology textbooks after the state textbook adoption committee had already approved them.

Having passed in the House, HB 580 has been assigned to the Senate Education Committee. Since the legislature will adjourn in less than two weeks, a committee meeting must be held soon. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, June 16. The LCFS will send a representative to testify against the bill.

HB 580 is a bad law that threatens the quality of learning materials on which Louisiana students depend at a time when they need the highest quality science education possible. It is also a disaster for school budgets.

The LCFS urges the Senate to vote against the bill. Concerned citizens should call their Senate representatives and ask them to oppose it.

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**\*The Louisiana Coalition for Science is a group of concerned Louisiana residents working to protect the teaching of science in Louisiana. See [www.lasciencecoalition.org](http://www.lasciencecoalition.org).**