CODOFIL Given Unusual Status

Baton Rouge, La. (AP) — The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana is being given an unusual status within the state Department of Education — it won’t be under the boss.

The House passed a bill Wednesday that removes CODOFIL from the superintendent’s authority.

The French-language agency will be part of the Department of Education budget.

CODOFIL promotes the teaching of French in South Louisiana schools. It also sponsors exchange programs and student tours of Canada and France.

South Louisiana representatives who pushed the bill said it would enhance CODOFIL’s prestige, although they didn’t give details to explain their statement. Critics doubted the move is good business sense.

“It was a mild clash,” said Rep. Walter Bigby of Bossier City. “It’ll be as autonomous as the LSU Board of Supervisors, without being in the constitution.

“We should vote this down,” Bigby added. “But under the circumstances, as the French say, ‘Ils sont part.’”

The Cajun representatives told the Anglo-Saxons to calm their fears.

“They’re not going to run wild. They still have to get their budget approved,” said Rep. M.J. Laborde of Sulphur.

Rep. Cecil Picard of Maurice said the bill would allow CODOFIL to control its own budget. He also said that critics didn’t understand CODOFIL’s mission.

“This is very important for our international prestige,” Picard said. “You don’t know French, you couldn’t understand.”

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