Creationism Bill Sent To House Floor

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The House Education Committee has proved to be a place of recreation for scientific creationists.

After losing key battles in a Senate committee and on the Senate floor on their bill, the group convinced the House committee to go along with a bill that would force public schools to teach scientific creationism if they teach the theory of evolution.

As it reached the committee, the bill by Sen. Bill Keith of Shreveport said such instruction would be at the option of the teacher.

Opponents of the measure said that was merely repeating the law on the books after amending out the mandatory provision.

Keith, a lay minister, began the hearing by saying that the issue is not one of teaching religion in the schools as has been charged by opponents.

"There is a body of evidence and data totally apart and separate from the Bible," said Keith.

Creation scientists believe that the world was created suddenly and call Darwin's theory of evolution a fairy tale not supported by any real facts.

In addition, Keith charged that Darwin's theory is taught as fact in Louisiana schools.

Four Louisiana university professors joined him in support of the bill but did not detail any facts supporting scientific creationism.

Their time was spent, for the most part, denouncing Darwin's theory.

Dr. Edward Boudreaux of the University of New Orleans stressed that, "objective information of science does point to evidence of a creator," he said. "Evolution is the mythology of science, a fairy tale like frogs changing into men."

Opponents, mostly science teachers and university professors, charged that the creation scientists are trying to bring legitimacy of their belief through legislation because the scientific community has rejected them.

"The bill lends credence in trying to make God a scientific subject and undermines the foundation of religion," said Bill Craig of the University of New Orleans, adding that the belief in scientific creationism is not based on science but on a miracle.

George Kent of the Louisiana Academy of Scientists said scientific creationism is no more than the story of Genesis and should be taught in churches.

"Don't let religion in the public schools under the guise of science," he said.

The bill now goes to the House and if passed in its present form, must go back to the Senate for concurrence in House committee amendments.

The bill was approved unanimously.