Creation defense funds voted down

By United Press International

For a second time, state legislators have refused to appropriate $100,000 to defend Louisiana's creation science law — the only such statute in the nation, officials said Saturday.

Attorney General William J. Guste Jr. said he needed the money to defend the statute against a lawsuit seeking to have the measure declared unconstitutional.

He wanted the $100,000 to help alleviate a financial burden the case is expected to place on the attorney general's office.

Guste said he hoped to use the money to pay for bringing in expert witnesses to help the state properly prepare for the case.

The creation science law requires educators who teach the theory of evolution in public classrooms to give equal time to the Biblical version of man's origin.

The Interim Emergency Board approved the $100,000 legal fund at a meeting Oct. 19.

However, a board spokesman said the proposal failed to receive a required two-thirds majority vote in the House or Senate in mail ballots received from legislators.

The board first approved the appropriation at a September meeting and the proposal gained a two-thirds vote of approval in mail ballots from senators. However, House members failed to pass the measure.

The board again submitted the proposal to legislators in October, but both the House and Senate failed to approve the funding.

The American Civil Liberties Union has challenged the legality of Louisiana's creation science law, approved by the Legislature in 1981.

A similar law in Arkansas has been struck down in federal court.