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"Sen. David Vitter, R-La., earmarked \$100,000 in a spending bill for a Louisiana Christian group that has challenged the teaching of Darwinian evolution in the public school system and to which he has political ties," [reports](#) [4] the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* (September 22, 2007). Buried in the Senate Appropriations Committee's version of the appropriations bill for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education is a provision allocating funds to the Louisiana Family Forum of Baton Rouge "to develop a plan to promote better science education." The bill is presently awaiting action on the floor of the Senate.

In a written statement, Vitter explained, "This program helps supplement and support educators and school systems that would like to offer all of the explanations in the study of controversial science topics such as global warming and the life sciences." The *Times-Picayune* added, "The money in the earmark will pay for a report suggesting 'improvements' in science education in Louisiana, the development and distribution of educational materials and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Ouachita Parish School Board's 2006 policy that opened the door to biblically inspired teachings in science classes."

Adopted in 2006 with the backing of the Louisiana Family Forum, the Ouachita Parish School Board's policy permits teachers to help students to understand "the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught"; "biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming and human cloning" are the only topics specifically mentioned. A local paper editorially described it as "a policy that is so clear that one School Board member voted affirmatively while adding, 'but I don't know what I'm voting on'" (Monroe *News-Star*, December 3, 2006).

Although the Ouachita policy reflects the stealth creationist campaign of "teach the controversy," the Louisiana Family Forum is not always so coy. The *Times-Picayune* reported: "Until recently, its Web site

contained a 'battle plan to combat evolution,' which called the theory a 'dangerous' concept that 'has no place in the classroom.' The document was removed after a reporter's inquiry"; that document was written by Kent Hovind, the flamboyant young-earth creationist who is presently serving a ten-year sentence in federal prison for tax offenses and obstruction of justice.

Charles Kincade, a civil rights lawyer in Monroe, Louisiana, told the *Times-Picayune* that "The problem is, except for fringe people, evolution is an accepted fact of science. To suggest otherwise is misleading. They are trying to backdoor creationism." Steve Ellis of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a group that opposes earmarks and compiles searchable databases identifying their congressional sponsors, commented, "Using an earmark to dictate that the Louisiana Family Forum receive the funding to develop a science education program ironically ignores a hallmark of scientific research, making decisions on the basis of competitive, empirical research."

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