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[Home](#) > Groups Ask Senate to Remove Earmark Promoting Creationism from Spending Bill

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11.17.2007

[Groups Ask Senate to Remove Earmark Promoting Creationism from Spending Bill](#) [3]

The following is a press release, dated October 17, 2007, from Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Groups Ask Senate to Remove Earmark Promoting Creationism from Spending Bill

Coalition of Educational, Scientific and Religious Organizations Says Vitter Allocation is Unconstitutional

More than 30 organizations have joined forces to urge the U.S. Senate to remove a provision from an appropriations bill that directs tax money to a Louisiana group that promotes creationism.

U.S. Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) inserted the earmark into the Appropriations Committee's report on a bill allocating money for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. Vitter wants to designate \$100,000 to the Louisiana Family Forum (LFF) "to develop a plan to promote better science education."

In a [letter](#) [4] (PDF) to every member of the Senate, the groups point out that the LFF is a creationist organization with clear religious ties. Awarding tax money to this organization, they argue, presents serious church-state problems.

"This makes about as much sense as asking a plumber to fix your car you've got the wrong person for the job," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church

and State, one of the groups opposing the earmark. "The creationists' main goal is to spread fundamentalist dogma, not enhance scientific literacy."

The letter points out that the Louisiana Family Forum is clearly sectarian in character.

Reads the letter, "The Louisiana Family Forum's mission is to 'persuasively present biblical principles in centers of influence,' including schools. One way the LFF seeks to accomplish its mission is by advocating for teaching creationism in the science classroom....This is despite the fact that courts have consistently held this tactic to be unconstitutional and that 'the scientific consensus around evolution is overwhelming.' Constitutional and scientific issues aside, underwriting LFF's study of this questionable 'science curriculum policy' for which it has already been a vigorous advocate is a dubious use of federal funding, to say the least."

The letter cites numerous court cases declaring teaching creationism in public schools unconstitutional and adds, "Not only would granting federal funding for the LFF's program be unconstitutional, it also would be bad policy that would infringe upon students' religious freedom and undermine their education in the important discipline of science."

Groups endorsing the letter come from the scientific, educational, civil liberties and religious communities. They include Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Association of School Administrators, the American Association of University Women, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, the National Education Association, the National Science Teachers Association and the Union for Reform Judaism.

The original [press release](#) [5] is available on American United's website.

[Anti-Evolution](#) [6]

[2007](#) [7]

[National](#) [8]

[+ read](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13189>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/ncse-staff>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2007/11/groups-ask-senate-to-remove-earmark-promoting-creationism-fr-001314>

[4] http://www.au.org/site/DocServer/2007-10-17_Letter_re_Vitter_Earmark_-_Final.pdf?docID=2041

[5] http://www.au.org/site/News2?abbr=pr&page=NewsArticle&id=9431&security=1002&news_iv_ctrl=1241

[6] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

[7] <https://ncse.com/news/2007>

[8] <https://ncse.com/news/national>