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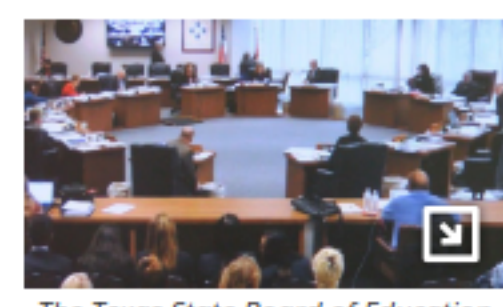
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LSU professor discusses ongoing evolution vs. creationism debate at SFA

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By Donna McCollum, Multi-Media Journalist [CONNECT](#)



The Texas State Board of Education debated this week how evolution should be taught in the classroom. (Source: KTRE Staff)

NACOGDOCHES, TX (KTRE) - This week's preliminary vote by the Texas Board of Education to change science lessons challenging evolution happens to fall at the same time International Darwin Day is celebrated.

One researcher from the neighboring state of Louisiana shared his knowledge on the topic at Stephen F. Austin State University Friday.

Sunday will mark the 208th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth. The debates over Darwin's evolution theory, first presented in the "The Origin of Species" have been going on almost that long.



Dr. Charles Pence, assistant professor of philosophy and religious studies at LSU, believes the debate doesn't belong in high school science classrooms. (Source: KTRE Staff)

LSU professor of philosophy and religion, Dr. Charles Pence, a guest of SFA's biology department, said the debates of evolution vs. creationism all have a common thread.

"And it's the idea that, 'Well, there is some sort of disagreement, therefore there's a debate and therefore there are two sides to the debate and by extension, both sides deserve equal time,' Pence said.

That concept was demonstrated to its fullest this week during testimony on the topic before the State Board of Education. A preliminary vote approved language that challenges evolution.



The debate has been going on for centuries. (Source: KTRE Staff)

Pence contends creationism and related theories lack scientific data, so it doesn't belong in the high school science classroom.

"That's not a debate that happens in the science classroom," Pence said. "That's a debate that happens in the philosophy classroom."

The discussion is worthy, but Pence contends non-scientific ideas in a science classroom opens the door to costly, political divisions.

"It unfortunately places a burden on individual localities to have to bring a lawsuit, right," Pence said. This is sort of how this has started to washout in the 21st century."



Sunday is International Charles Darwin Day celebrating the 208th anniversary of the early scientist. (Source: KTRE Staff)

Darwin, if able, could be amused by the discussion of today. At least, Darwin Day's mission states it's a time to celebrate perpetual curiosity.

Educators say the State Board of Education's ultimate decision on science curriculum will be far reaching. Texas is one of the largest purchasers in the nation of textbooks. The state influences science instruction across the U.S.

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