

Utah evolution bill revised for third time

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Controversial Utah legislation challenging the way evolution is taught in public schools is, itself, evolving.

The legislation's sponsor, Republican state Rep. Jim Ferrin from Orem, wants to substitute the bill a third time to delete all references to "origins of life," but still prevent teachers from telling students they evolved from apes, the Salt Lake City Deseret Morning News reported.

The proposed change hasn't diminished school officials' opposition to the bill, which they say dilutes the state board's authority to set curriculum.

Surveys indicate most Utah residents support the regulation of evolution lessons.

A survey conducted for the newspaper and KSL-TV by Dan Jones & Associates, a Salt Lake City-based market research firm, showed 55 percent of Utahans favor legislation requiring public school teachers to "teach that evolution is not indisputably proven and there could be other reasons for human development."

Forty percent said they oppose such a measure, and 5 percent were undecided.

Opponents say the legislation misrepresents the fact-backed theory of evolution and stems from legislative intent based on religious beliefs.

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