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CALIFORNIA CURRICULUM COMMISSION

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A meeting of the Curriculum and Supplemental Material Commission was held July 24-26, at the Orange County Office of Education in Costa Mesa. I got a tip from Dr. Frank Awbrey, California Committee of Correspondence liaison, Monday, July 22, that creationists pre-empted scheduled testimony time, but that others would get a chance to testify later in the afternoon if they showed up. I called CCC member Maurice Ogden, Atheist United member John Earl, and Southern California Skeptics Chairman Al Seckel to spread the word about the chance of testifying at the textbook commission meeting.

Nell Segraves, her attorney John Rolls, Dr. Robert Kofahl, Christopher Chui, John S. Hills, and several other creationists testified first, almost two hours total. Every one mentioned the "anti-dogmatism rule" and that teaching evolution was a discrimination against the rights of the "Christian" child. Implicit under the mention was the threat of taking the state to court again on this issue.

After the textbook publishers had their scheduled testimonies, which mentioned nothing about the creation/evolution issue, evolutionists from the CCC, Southern California Skeptics, ACLU, Atheists United, and other groups gave their testimonies. William Bennetta of San Francisco excerpted his testimony from his upcoming article in the quarterly of the California Academy of Sciences (October). Countering the creationists' contention that evolution was treated "dogmatically" in the seven texts reviewed, Bennetta said that evolution, if it was mentioned at all, was treated on the level of the knowledge of a 16th century monk, if not the level of an 19th century naturalist. Some books did not mention evolution at all.

Queen Silver mentioned in her testimony possible discrimination against children of other faiths if Creationism was to be taught as science in the schools. Al Seckel mentioned his background work with Carl Sagan of Cornell University, his graduate work at CalTech, and said that many of the unifying ideas of the sciences have no other explanation