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Oklahoma House Passes Bills Aiming to Curb Divorce

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) - An Oklahoma House committee has advanced a pair of bills making divorce more difficult to obtain, but some experts doubt they'll lower the state's divorce rate.

The House Judiciary Committee approved both bills Tuesday, each with a 10-6 vote and all five Democrat members of the committee voting against them. One bill creates a "covenant marriage" option for Oklahoma and requires counseling before the wedding and any divorce. The second would require all divorcing couples with children to undergo an education program on divorce's effects.

Only three states, including Arkansas, offer covenant marriages. Oklahoma's divorce rate is among the nation's highest, but Arkansas' rate is higher. Only a small fraction of couples there choose covenant marriages.

Researchers say early relationship education has a better chance of lowering divorce rates.

AP