

Jones urges tougher system for habituals

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Jim Jones, Burley, who hopes to become the state's next attorney general, proposed changes in the state's parole system that will make it tougher for habitual criminals.

Jones, an announced Republican contender for attorney general, said while in Idaho Falls that the parole system is not discouraging the toughened criminals from continuing their life of crime.

Instead, said Jones, he would propose a change in the law that would not give the parole board authority to release convicts prior to fulfillment of their sentences.

He also recommended the judge and prosecuting attorney serving in the case should be consulted as to prior records whenever a convict is considered for parole.

He acknowledged it would take more time on the part of the judge and prosecuting attorney but that it would be worth it and perform and admirable service for society.

"I think existing laws need to be changed so we can get people who are knowledgeable in criminology and who have a background in law enforcement involved."

Jones explained under the present statutes, the qualifications set out merely background in sociology, psychology and rehabilitation.

"Essentially," said Jones, "we need to recognize that some can be rehabilitated but others can't or won't be. The makeup of the parole board should have people who recognize that some people aren't or can't be rehabilitated. You have to give the different types of treatment at the state penitentiary."

"I think as far as the incorrigibles and repeat offenders are concerned, they should be separated from others. These repeat offenders should be given longterm sentences, and perhaps mandatory minimum sentences. I think if you do that, you will create a much more effective deterrent to crime."

"Lots of people view crime as a business and they view jail and penitentiary time as an acceptable risk because they know it will be comparatively short. There are lots of methods the inmate can use to get out quiet early."

"However, we need to design a system to prevent this from happening. It would help to require the parole board to get input from the judge and prosecutor in the case. 'Lots of times, the parole board is working in the dark because it didn't know what the convict was like before coming to the penitentiary.'