Jones' legislative bills before House

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Bills in Idaho Attorney General Jim Jones' package in the Idaho Legislature in most cases should receive affirmative action.

Jim Jones

They all are in the hopper, most of them originating in the House Judiciary Committee and awaiting action before the full House or Senate. Jones said he is confident most of them will pass.

Perhaps the most important bill would require criminals to compensate their victims. It also provides victims with specific rights and protections.

This was concocted by an ad hoc committee appointed by Idaho Supreme Court Justice Charles Donaldson. It requires criminals to com pensate victims for economic losses including property damage, cash taken or destroyed, lost wages and medical expenses resulting from criminal misconduct.

It would not include compensation for pain and suffering or emotional distress. In those cases, the victim would have to pursue such compensation in civil court. The bill passed the Senate with only three dissenting votes.

Jones said he did not back a bill that would have used state funds to provide victim restitution. It would have added $2 surcharge for each misdemeanor charges.

Another bill would ask the Legislature to consolidate laws controlling standards for public officials that are scattered throughout the 20-volume Idaho Code. It will ask lawmakers to apply to themselves conflict-of-interest standards most state and local government employees observe.

Child abuse

Another measure would attach criminal penalties for failure to report child abuse.

A bill would extend the time limit for filing charges of lewd and lascivious conduct from three to five years.

Also under consideration is a measure which asks that laws already on the books governing failure to report child abuse be enhanced by specific penalties. The charges would be $25 fine for first offense and for second offense the court could assess normal misdemenear penalities of up to $300 fine and six months in jail.

Another bill, if passed, would make it a misdemeanor for a parent to kidnap a child placed in custody of the other parent. If the child is held over 90 days, than it would become a felony.

Jones said a bill has been approved by the House Judiciary Committee that would place all state deputy attorneys under his office. It has in the past been opposed by Democratic Gov. John V. Evans and the Democrats. This time, however, the governor and Democrats do not have the one-third majority to sustain a gubernatorial veto in the Senate.

Another bill would require death-row inmates to file an application for commutation or pardon in an expeditious manner or lose the right to do so.

Deputies

Another measure would place all deputy attorneys under his supervision. Jones explained he has 17 deputies in the central office in Statehouse directly under his control. However he shares authority with 48 others who are stationed in state agencies in Boise and throughout the state. He contends it would bring about greater efficiency and save money.

Jones said he is co-sponsoring with Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa a bill that would provide for a recount at state expense in a close election. This would apply to elections that are within one-tenth of 1 percent.

The bill was prompted by the 1984 2nd District Congrssional race in which Democrat Richard Stallings won by 170 votes over Republican Congressman George V. Hansen, noted Jones.

He said this law would have applied in the election because the difference was less than 202 votes which is the one-tenth of 1 percent.

"The only other close election that it would have affected was one in 1954 in a school superintendent's race," said Jones. "In other words it rarely happens."

Jones said cost of the state is figured at about $25,000 for a congressional election and twice that much for a statewide race.

Another bill also under consideration will require a 20 percent delegate vote at a state party convention to enable candidates for state and congressional offices to get on the ballot, said Jones. This would limit the number to not more than four candidates for any congressional or state office.

Regarding his own political aspirations, Jones, 44, said he found that in a number of Lincoln Day banquets he attended last month he was urged by many to seek the 2nd Distrct congressional seat in 1986.

"I found that many wanted to have a candidate who is well-known in the state, such as myself," he said.

Also already indicating interest in the race are Republians Don Adamson, Jerome attorney, who was defeated in the 1984 primary by Hansen, and State Sen. Dane Watkins, Idaho Falls businessman.