

# Harris defends proposed criminal parole measure

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Jim Harris, Ada County prosecutor and Republican attorney general candidate, defended Friday a bill he sponsored on criminal parole procedures against the criticism of his primary opponent, Jim Jones, Jerome state attorney.

Harris said in a Post-Register interview here the measure was endorsed by both the Idaho Prosecuting Attorney Association and the Idaho Sheriff Association and was intended to more clearly define the appeal process.

He rejected the charge of Jones that it would expand the appeal rights of convicted criminals.

"It is obvious the state prosecuting attorneys and the sheriff would not endorse a bill that would expand the rights of criminals," said Harris.

The bill, he said, passed overwhelming in the House and would also have been approved in the Senate but was held by the Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee by a single vote.

"The bill was built on input of both the prosecutors and sheriffs on the parole-making function," said Harris.

The bill, he explained, requires a parole board



Jim Harris

to issues written opinions and decisions which is not done presently, and it would allow appeal process by the governor in cases where appeals are brought.

"It is true that not only can prosecutors and attorney generals appeal but it grants that rights to the inmates," Harris said. "Any first year law student knows that both sides have the right for appeals. It allows the governor to summarily dismiss appeals without hearing after a review of the written findings by the State Parole Board.

"The prosecutors of the state didn't see the bill as posing threats to paroles. It proposes to build a safety valve in a system in those minor cases where the parole board had made a previous mistake."

"I think what concerns me most is my opponent's position of siding with the defense, chairman of the parole board, the Public Defenders Associations and against the prosecutors and sheriff associations. The attorney general should have a close working relations with county prosecutors and sheriffs.

In other issues, Harris said he has raised about \$20,000 so far in his primary contest, that he is gratified over his broad-based support through out the state but acknowledge he lacks name identification in east Idaho; and that he is happy over passage of a bill that places on the ballot for the November general election to increase the prosecuting attorney terms from two to four years, same as other major county offices.

Harris said there is an urgent need for a consumer protection bureau in Idaho, believing this state is the only one that lacks this.