

Jones criticizes criminal aid bill

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BY BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

Jim Jones, Jerome, Republican attorney general candidate, took a swing Friday at a bill sponsored by his primary opponent which he said was soft on criminals.

Jones said in a Post-Register interview here that Ada County Prosecutor Jim Haris sponsored

a measure which he said should be labeled "The Criminal Relief Act".

Jones said he appeared before the Idaho Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee Wednesday to testify against it and it was tabled and killed for this session of the Legislature.

"It would have been a disaster in our legal system if there were

no changes to strike appeals and if it didn't tighten up language to prevent suits," said Jones. "This bill looked serious enough to pose a threat in favor of criminals."

Jones also said his bill on the State Pardon and Parole System called for the governor to have a voice on reduction of pardons but not paroles. He explained he has not been pushing for gubernatorial involvement in the parole system "because it may create more problems than it may solve."

Jones said a recent Post-Register editorial quoted him inaccurately on this piece of legislation and that his views on the pardon and parole system are different than those of Haris.

Harris bill, he explained, provided for an appeal for parole decisions so that the governor could change any parole decision. He said it would have allowed convicts to appeal parole decisions which he said "would be a disaster."

"You can bet every penitentiary inmate would appeal every decision and there would be a lot more paroles being granted, either by the State Parole Board or governor."

"It would give convicts the right to challenge in court. It would need court interpretation on the bill and that again would have opened a can of worms."

In other matters Jones said he likely would have done as Attorney General David H. Leroy did in instituting a reapportionment lawsuit in behalf of 21 Senate Republicans. Jones pointed out this is a majority of the senators and gives justification he is representing state government.