

**STATE DIGEST**

**Panel OKs Changes To Sex Offender Registry**

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota Senate committee on Thursday advanced a bill that would create tiers for the state's sex offender registry, giving some people a chance to get their names removed from the list eventually.

The measure, which now heads to the full Senate, would create three groups of sex crimes.

Those convicted of the most serious ones, including crimes against children, could never get off the offender list. Those convicted of midlevel sex crimes could ask to be removed after 25 years, and those convicted of less serious crimes such as misdemeanor indecent exposure or statutory rape when the offender is 21 or younger could ask to be removed after 10 years.

"I think it's a good bill," Attorney General Marty Jackley told the committee.

The bill is a product of a summer study by a special legislative committee. It advanced out of the Judiciary Committee on a 7-0 vote Thursday after several debate sessions and a half-dozen amendments during the past month.

Lawmakers have said for years that it's unfair to treat those convicted of less serious sex crimes the same as those convicted of rape and other more serious crimes.

Convicted sex offenders are required to register with local law enforcement. Their names, addresses and crimes are available on a state Internet site.

Committee members killed a separate bill asking the attorney general to study and report on possible improvements to the Internet site after Jackley said his office would begin working on the changes immediately and report back to the committee next year.

**S.D. Senate OKs**

**Change In School Aid**

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Senate has approved a measure that would boost state financial aid to school districts once the economy recovers.

Senators voted 27-8 to pass the measure and send it to the House. The Senate has passed similar bills in the past few years, but the House has rejected those bills.

South Dakota law now requires that state aid to schools increase each year by the rate of inflation, up to a maximum of 3 percent. The bill would increase school aid each year by the same percentage that general state revenue increases, with several limitations.

The measure says state aid could not drop from year to year, but it also could not rise by more than 7 percent.

**Attorney Wants Delay In S.D. Murder Trial**

RAPID CITY (AP) — The attorney for a man charged in the 1975 killing in South Dakota of a fellow American Indian Movement activist says next week's trial should be postponed.

Richard Marshall has pleaded not guilty in federal court to murder and aiding and abetting in the death of Annie Mae Aquash.

Defense attorney Dana Hanna says in court documents filed Thursday that he needs more time to review information recently provided by the government. It involves evidence from the Denver Police Department, which investigated the murder and later destroyed some records.

A judge has not ruled on the motion.

**Nebraska Manufacturer Recalls Pet Food**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Lincoln-based Nature's Variety is voluntarily recalling packages of its chicken-flavored pet food over concerns of salmonella contamination.

The company says in a statement issued Thursday that no pets or humans have been sickened.

Included in the recall are three-pound packages of chicken medallions, six-pound packages of chicken patties and two-pound packages of chicken chubs, all with a best-by date of Nov. 10, 2010.

Salmonella can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections, especially in young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

**Woman Pleads Guilty To Embezzling**

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Belle Fourche woman has changed her plea to guilty in the embezzlement of thousands of dollars from the Chamber of Commerce. Tracy Shellhammer entered the plea Thursday in Butte County Court. The 28-year-old had pleaded not guilty to the embezzlement charge in January.

Shellhammer says she stole more than \$36,000 over a two-year period while employed by the chamber.

S.D. LEGISLATURE

**House Committee Rejects City Sales Tax Bill**

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press Writer

PIERRE — South Dakota cities failed Thursday in their bid for authority to impose an extra penny sales tax to pay for special projects or upgrades in roads, water lines and other service facilities.

The House Local Government Committee voted 10-3 to reject the measure after lawmakers said taxes should not

be raised while the economy is struggling. Rep. Val Rausch, R-Big Stone City, said taxes should never be raised unless government has no other option.

"The timing is not now," Rausch said. Opponents also argued that cities already can raise money for special projects or other services by voting to exceed state limits on property taxes. An extra sales tax would hit low-income people harder than wealthier people because

they spend most of their income on goods and services subject to the sales tax, they said.

Cities can impose a general sales tax of up to 2 percent, with the option of a third penny on lodging, alcohol, food and entertainment.

The bill would have let cities impose an extra 1 percent general sales tax to pay for identified projects or services. Those could have included building proj-

ects such as events centers or basic services such as roads or sewer systems.

The extra sales tax could not have been imposed without approval by voters in a city election, and the tax could have levied only until the project was paid for.

But opponents said low-income people would be hit hard by a sales tax, even though they likely would never attend a concert or sporting event at the proposed center.

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