

Idaho Senate approves new 5-level registry for sex offenders

By RYAN STRUYK, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The Idaho Senate has approved a new five-level registration system for sexual offenders.

The Senate voted to pass the plan 20-14, despite several lawmakers' concerns about the more than \$900,000 price tag in new general funds.

The most severe tier — reserved for some child abuse, murder after rape or kidnapping with intent to rape— would require registration every three months and a term of life in the system. The lowest tier of offenders would need to register once per year and would be in the registry for 10 years.

The bill now goes to the House side for consideration.

The legislation comes after the Idaho Supreme Court struck down the state's former system and violent sex offender category in 2009 over concerns with due process.

The plan garnered opposition from all 10 Senate members of the state's powerful budget-writing committee, including its co-chairman, Republican Sen. Dean Cameron from Rupert.

"I have no confidence that what's proposed to us will be a solution and won't just be a huge boondoggle," he said. "The fiscal impact is all general funds. There are no dedicated funds in it."

Most of the money will be used to fund 12 staff positions for the Sexual Offender Management Board, Department of Correction and Idaho State Police.

But Senate Majority Leader Sen. Bart Davis from Idaho Falls told lawmakers that the state needed to have some system in place.

"This isn't a change — we don't have a system," he said. "Is Senate Bill 1095 the right solution? I'm dubious. But right now this is what I have. I've got to have something."