

Public Defender Bill Is Approved

The Senate has approved a bill that calls for the Fulton County Commission to set up a legal system to defend the indigent.

House Okays Probation Chief's Raise

A bill allowing the Board of Probation to raise the annual salary of Department Director Ed Kendrick from \$9,850 to \$12,000 has passed the House.

The original bill called for a raise to \$15,000 but this was amended in the House by Rep. Bobby Pafford.

The House had vetoed the bill earlier in the week but when it was brought up for reconsideration Thursday it passed 137-17.

One of the bill's authors is Sen. Cy Chapman, the man who filled former Cobb Sen. Ed Kendrick's seat when Mr. Kendrick accepted the job as director of the probation department.

The only opposition to the pay raise bill came from Rep. George Jordan of Coffee County.

Rep. Jordan said the bill was "fiscally irresponsible" in that it would allow the probation board to hire as many field supervisors as it wanted to at a salary matching that of the director.

Author of the bill, Rep. Tom Dillon, says it is "significant, far-reaching legislation." It needs only the governor's signature to become law.

Rep. Dillon said the public defender system will enable Fulton to carry out the concept that a person is innocent until proven guilty. He said poor people accused of crimes "can't defend themselves against a staff of well-trained lawyers" from the solicitor general's office.

Rep. Dillon, a trial lawyer, said the idea that a public defender system will hurt trial lawyers' practice is "completely false."

THE BILL calls for the county commission, which has already allocated \$50,000 for the system, to implement the provisions of the bill immediately.

The commissioners can expand the present system of court-appointed lawyers, create a full-time defender office or call on Legal Aid to handle the work.

More than 60 per cent of the 3,000 persons indicted annually by the Fulton Grand Jury are considered too poor to pay for a lawyer.

A state-wide defender bill has doubtless failed for this session. Many legislators wanted to wait until next year and see how the Fulton system worked before passing a state-wide public defender system.



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WOMEN OF THE HOUSE—The only women in the Georgia House of Representatives, Mrs. Grace T. Hamilton of Atlanta (L) and Mrs. Janet S. Merrit of Americus, study one of the many bills before the House.