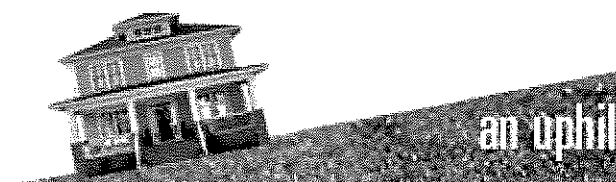


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Vetoes Bills Aimed at Reducing False Convictions to Be Reintroduced

Proponents attribute the governor's action to misunderstandings of the proposals by his staff.

By Maura Dolan
Times Staff Writer

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A proponent of two bills aimed at reducing the number of false convictions in California said Monday that the legislation would be reintroduced again in the next session.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger over the weekend vetoed the bills, which contained recommendations from the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, a panel of prosecutors, defense lawyers, police and others created by the state Senate to examine why people are convicted of crimes they did not commit.

Commission Chairman John Van de Kamp on Monday attributed the vetoes to misunderstandings of the proposals by the governor's staff and said they would be proposed again.

The commissioners "remain optimistic that once the governor's staff understand the reasons for these measures, we can reach closure with the language he is willing to accept," Van de Kamp said.

One of the bills, written by Sen. Carole Midgen (D-San Francisco), would have required the Department of Justice and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to develop guidelines for eyewitness evidence.

The commission urged the Legislature to create new procedures for police lineups, photo displays and other eyewitness examinations after the panel determined that inaccurate eyewitness testimony was the leading reason for false convictions.

The second bill, written by Sen. Elaine Alquist (D-Santa Clara), would have required police to record interrogations at police stations of suspects believed to have committed violent crimes.

In vetoing the bill on eyewitnesses, Schwarzenegger said he opposed giving the Department of Justice and the peace officer commission the power to create eyewitness identification policies that would not be subject to legislative review. He said the other bill had drafting errors that could reduce public safety.

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