Drunk Driving Bills Signed By Treen

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) - Two more bills aimed at drunk drivers have been signed into law as Gov. Dave Treen gets down to the bottom of the pile of measures passed by the Legislature.

In the latest list of signings announced by Treen's office is a measure granting the governor broad power to grant additional tax exemptions to industry and another to require the governor and candidates for that office to file detailed personal financial statements each year.

The Legislature passed 954 bills and the governor has acted on all but a handful.

According to Treen's office, the governor has until Wednesday morning to take final action on what bills remained from the session, which ended July 12.

One of those is the bill which would increase interest rates on revolving charge accounts to 21 percent.

Treen said two weeks ago that he had made up his mind on what to do about the measure, but refused to say whether he would sign it or veto it.

As of late Monday, the bill was still on his desk and he was "still looking at it," a press aide said Tuesday.

Any bill not acted on by Wednesday will automatically become law.

One of the bills signed Tuesday will allow the Department of Public Safety to suspend the driver's license of any habitual offender of drunk driving laws.

The other will set stiff penalties, including a six-month jail term, for conviction of a person found driving under license suspension from a previous drunk driving conviction.

"These two new laws will add to the tools available to law enforcement officers," Treen said in a prepared release.

Earlier he had signed the administration's main drunk driving bill which goes into law on Jan. 1. That law will stiffen penalties for first, second and third DUI offenders.

The tax exemption bill allows the Board of Commerce, with the governor's approval, to grant ailing corporations or others up to four percent exemptions on the various taxes they pay.

However, total exemptions for all companies cannot exceed $57 million a year.

The financial statement bill was sponsored by Treen and requires governors and candidates for governor to disclose their personal financial interests.

Opponents of the measure charged that it was aimed at former Gov. Edwin Edwards, an announced candidate for governor.

In still another signing, Treen okayed a bill to create an ombudsman position in the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs.

The law directs the ombudsman to promote community involvement with residents of long-term care facilities and to attempt to resolve residents' problems with the facilities.

The ombudsman will have the authority to visit nursing homes to check complaints.