La. eyeing compensation

Prompted by the recent convictions of ski-mask rapist Jon Barry Simonis, the Louisiana Legislature is considering several bills to compensate victims of violent crime at the expense of criminals.

Rep. Eddie Heaton, D-New Orleans, headed a study committee that developed a bill to grant medical expenses and lost wages to persons injured during the commission of a crime against them.

Heaton’s House Bill 29 would allow victims to seek reimbursement of $100 to $10,000. Compensation would not be granted for money or possessions that were stolen, or damaged as a result of a crime. Applications would be reviewed by a Crime Compensation Board.

The program, expected to cost close to $1 million a year, would be funded by court costs added to criminal fines — $5 for misdemeanors, including traffic tickets, and $15 for felonies.

Other provisions of the bill would allow the attorney general to sue convicts to regain the money the state pays to the victim. The compensation board would be required to aid the attorney general.

Heaton wants to allow notorious criminals to keep no more than 10 percent of any money they earn from interviews and representations of of their lives in movies, books and television programs.

Simonis, an admitted rapist sentenced to 21 life sentences and 2,681 years in prison for a three-year rape and robbery spree that included dozens of crimes in Louisiana, has announced his intentions to write a book to make money for his family.