

Change it in Kyra's name

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Call it Kyra's Law.

We do that nowadays. And it's a good idea. Tying an effort to a real person's name adds urgency to the cause. It personalizes it. And the personal grief, misery, suffering is what is typically missing from any public conversation about the victims of heinous crimes.

It happens every day. When we read about a particularly brutal act it hardly registers. While that person and his or her family are forever scarred, we move on to the sports page.

It's even worse in the courtroom. It is a perfectly civilized setting where the participants dress their best and discuss awful, horrible, unimaginable atrocities in the most polite, respectful language. Courtesies not extended in everyday life n 'yes sir,' 'no sir' n are the language of the courtroom. And I suppose that is the way it has to be. Matters would be quite untidy if it were left to the Cro-Magnons of the world. People like me n and most of you n who think that people who harm children ought to be beaten to a soft paste. Instead, of course, we treat people like Charlie Smith with the utmost respect. We hire them expensive professional help, we provide their medications and we treat them with untold respect.

Of course, these meanderings will terribly upset our liberal friends who have never met anyone who is not a victim. We all know the drill. A bad childhood is a pre-requisite but let us not forget how many of these poor souls are victims of those horrible, awful drugs that they abuse through no fault of their own. All this explains why some believe the world is so terribly short of counselors. So many victims n so few to hold hands.

But let's get back to the point of all this n and yes, there is one.

Kyra's Law.

It's been done before. The most famous example being 'Jessica's Law.' For those who forget (and most of us did, proving the above point) Jessica Lunsford was the little girl who was raped and murdered by the sex offender who, after being arrested and convicted of child abuse, was given sufficient counseling so he could be released from prison.

To rape, abuse, torture and murder Jessica Lunsford.

The law, which most states have adopted but not Idaho, dictates that someone convicted of lewd and lascivious acts against anyone younger than 12 gets a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Given what happened in St. Maries last week, it just makes sense to mount a similar effort and name it for Kyra. The idea was suggested by Ginny Oakes, one of a legion of locals who are spitting mad about what happened in the Benewah County Courthouse last week.

Here's a recap of what transpired.

Charlie Smith and Christina Haynes subjected Kyra Wine n who was 3 years old at the time n to unspeakable torture over a two-week period. Torture, not abuse. At least that's what the evidence suggests since even a team of doctors cannot determine what exactly these two wretches did to this little girl. The abuse, it appears, was a prelude to the torture that transpired in the final days of Kyra's suffering at the hands of the two who discovered, via the Internet, that they were soul mates.

Kyra's feet were amputated as a result of the torture. Doctors believe the horrific wound on

her scalp will heal eventually, but forever prevent the growth of hair. Other scars, like those on her buttocks, will also remain forever.

For all this, young Charlie Smith will serve 10 years in prison.

Upon his release from prison Charlie Smith will be only 39 years old. While it will improve his chances if he learns how to wash his hair while in prison - something that apparently escaped his notice while in the Benewah County Jail n upon his release Charlie Smith will likely hop on the Internet and find another female companion. Since there is seemingly no shortage of women with young children whose fear of being alone is greater than their love for their children, it is entirely plausible that Charlie Smith could administer his handiwork on a child once again.

That's why some people are so mad.

Charlie Smith got the maximum sentence for the crime he committed.

Ten years and out.

Ten years is not half what he deserves. The fact he will be living among defenseless children is proof once again that the system needs repair. The law must be changed.

In the name of Kyra.

- DAN HAMMES is publisher of this newspaper.