

# OUR VIEW: Outlaw mentality doesn't work for Idahoans

By Murf Raquet, for the editorial board

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It's always interesting when the Idaho Legislature is in session.

This year, it's "let's all break the law."

Often, those we send to Boise have too much time on their hands, especially when the Joint Appropriations/Finance Committee takes its time to decide all-important money matters. Most legislation is stalled until the state's financial picture becomes "clearer."

In the meantime, lawmakers do the meet-and-greet circuit with lobbyists, cloister in caucuses and generally hurry up and wait.

Sometimes, a few independent-thinking souls will come up with an idea so outlandish that it actually gets legs in the legislative process.

This year, that honor falls to Rep. Jim Clark, R-Hayden, who introduced a bill to fight federal health-care reform. The bill would free residents from mandates to purchase insurance.

Clark's stand against federal legislation, which the states are bound to follow by Article VI of the Constitution, resembles that of then-Gov. George Wallace of Alabama, who defied federal civil-rights laws and physically blocked black students from entering the University of Alabama.

First of all, who really knows what health-care reform will look like? Mandated insurance could well be dropped from the final version. Besides, most versions stipulate insurance would only be mandatory if an individual could afford it.

Paying insurance premiums isn't fun, but try paying for health care without coverage. Many state residents can't, and therefore don't, seek medical attention until they are really sick.

And guess what, the state (taxpayers) ends up paying those patients' medical costs.

So, in that light, Clark must be advocating for some sort of statewide, state-paid health-care coverage for all Idaho residents. We'd love to see the dollar amounts in that.

Refusing to abide by federal law is foolish and will create unnecessary headaches for state officials.

Only one part of Clark's proposal makes sense on any level. The bill also would require Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden to mount a court challenge to federally mandated health-care laws if necessary. That's the proper way to proceed. Forget the clenched-fist defiance.