

## Commentary: Idaho's ultrasound mandate has limits

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

As did Virginia's Legislature last month, Idaho's Legislature is wading into controversial territory with a new law that, if enacted, would require that abortion providers administer an ultrasound test and share the results with women seeking abortions before the baby is destroyed. The unproven theory behind such laws is that once a woman sees her baby or hears its heartbeat, her maternal instincts will be activated and she'll change her mind, sparing the child's life.

Naturally, the left is portraying this as the highest order of extremism.

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If there is any evidence that such information ever changes a woman's mind, I have not seen it. Pro-life activists believe it would, but they are already predisposed to loving their children, born or unborn.

I went through school before sex education was part of the curriculum. Back then we believed that education meant learning how to read, write, gain some level of mathematical proficiency and maybe digest a little biology, chemistry, history and civics.

But even in that intellectually barren wasteland, I somehow still managed to learn enough about human reproduction that I could easily imagine what a human fetus looks like throughout gestation. It seems unlikely that anyone graduating from high school today would be less knowledgeable. Although if sex education is taught with the same proficiency as the core subjects, then it is entirely possible that a woman of child-bearing age today wouldn't know what her unborn baby looks like.

Nevertheless, it's hard to imagine that ultrasound images or the faint beating of a tiny heart would influence a woman's thinking once she had already taken the decision to abort the baby. Every woman who walks through an abortion mill's door knows what is going on inside her womb and knows what she is destroying.

On the other hand, it's hard to imagine a less-invasive medical procedure than an abdominal ultrasound. And it's difficult to fathom how anyone would consider it extreme. It's a routine procedure for most pregnant women in this country already. It's my understanding that abortion mills, such as the ironically misnamed Planned Parenthood, routinely perform ultrasound examinations as part of their due diligence before aborting the baby. If true, then the only difference between what abortion mills already do and what the law would require is a sharing of information.

This is just another of those not-so-rare occasions when the left invests itself in the defense of ignorance.

With a fiduciary interest in maximizing the number of abortions they perform, Planned Parenthood's interest in keeping its ultrasound data to itself is predictable. It has a vested interest in the dehumanization of unborn infants, and for that reason, it doesn't want pregnant women to see the babies whose lives they are about to end.

It's interesting that both pro-life activists and pro-abortion activists believe that humanizing an unborn child will discourage a woman from ending the child's life. Pro-life embraces the concept and pro-

abortion fears it.

But through all the debate surrounding this issue, it remains remarkable that four years ago, the press chose to keep the views of a genuine extremist quiet and not bring it into the arena of public debate.

As a cub state senator in Illinois, Barack Obama took a strong stand in favor of infanticide. The man who set records for voting "present" briefly grew a spine and fought fiercely to defeat a law that would have required abortionists to provide medical treatment to babies who survived abortion.

Inconceivable as it sounds, viable infants who survived late-term abortion procedures were not considered human beings in Illinois. Testimony of nurses employed by abortion mills described nightmarish scenes of surviving babies left on stainless steel tables to slowly die of hypothermia.

In 2002, Barack Obama argued vehemently against the "Induced Infant Liability Act." That law would have treated these survivors of late term abortions as the people they really were.

Amazingly this story gained almost no traction during the 2008 presidential campaign. After Newt Gingrich raised the issue during the Republican presidential primary debates, at least a couple of the moderators professed total ignorance.

It's unlikely that a great number of babies will have their lives saved by sharing ultrasound information with pregnant women. But how can anyone call that extremism when compared to a sitting president who was comfortable with the image of a crying baby left to die slowly of neglect?