

## Lawmaker asks if swallowed camera be used for female exam

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An Idaho lawmaker received a brief lesson on female anatomy after asking if a woman can swallow a small camera for doctors to conduct a remote gynecological exam.

The question Monday from Republican state Rep. Vito Barbieri came as the House State Affairs Committee heard nearly three hours of testimony on a bill that would ban doctors from prescribing abortion-inducing medication through telemedicine.

Dr. Julie Madsen was testifying in opposition to the bill when Barbieri asked the question. Madsen replied that would be impossible because swallowed pills do not end up in the vagina.

"Fascinating. That makes sense," Barbieri said, amid the crowd's laughter.

The committee approved the bill 13-4 on a party-line vote, where it now goes to the House floor for a full vote. Barbieri, who sits on the board of a crisis pregnancy center in northern Idaho, voted in favor of the legislation.

Under HB154, abortion-inducing medication could not be administered through telemedicine —which does not currently happen in Idaho— and requires doctors to make "all reasonable efforts" to schedule a follow-up visit. The bill is backed by the anti-abortion group Idaho Choose Life.

Anti-abortion advocates argue that the bill will protect women who may have an adverse reaction to abortion medication. Those opposed counter that the bill is an attempt to restrict abortions, pointing to women living in rural areas where access to clinics is already limited.

The measure is one of several abortion-related bills Idaho lawmakers are considering this legislative session.

This includes a proposed bill seeking to define the scope of telemedicine in Idaho, which somewhat overlaps with HB154, because it specifically bans would ban doctors from prescribing abortion drugs via videoconferencing. Over in the Idaho Senate, lawmakers are considering a bill that would require doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a local hospital.

The House State Affairs Committee is considered one of the most conservative committees in Idaho's Republican-controlled Statehouse. Already this year, the committee has killed a proposal that would provide legal protections to gay and lesbian Idahoans and halted legislation proposed by a 14-year-old girl to designate the Idaho Giant Salamander as the official state amphibian. It has endorsed, however, a bill that would expand parental rights in Idaho law.

"Children have no way to really challenge the forces that harm them and unborn children are especially susceptible to harm," said Republican Rep. Linden Bateman. "In my view, this may reduce the number of abortions."

This isn't the first time Idaho lawmakers have received attention while debating abortion legislation.

In 2013, Republican Rep. Ron Mendive drew audible gasps in a committee when he asked if the American Civil Liberties Union-Idaho's pro-abortion stance also meant they supported prostitution. A year prior, Republican Sen. Chuck Winder drew national criticism after he suggested on the Senate floor that a doctor should ask a woman who says she was raped could have been caused by "normal relations in a marriage."

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