

Taryn Thompson: Why Idaho needs to overturn vote against Child Support service bill

I got a call last night from a concerned friend (who also called the Hubster when I didn't immediately answer the phone). I didn't get much time to chat because our family was celebrating Grandpa's birthday but this man was calling the both of us to ask what is wrong with me: Am I worried that my kids' dad wouldn't pay child support? Is that why I'm so concerned about Idaho GOP legislators rejecting a bill that would keep the state's child support system intact?

My family is blessed in that I have a great relationship with my ex-husband and I have absolutely no doubt that even if Idaho's ability to process and enforce child support payments is crippled, I will continue to receive child support.

No, sir, I am not worried for myself or my kids.

I'm worried for the moms like my own, who never received child support for my brother from another father. I'm worried for the moms who greatly depend on child support to help keep their kids clothed and fed.

There is a dumpster on Highway 95 near Sandpoint that we call the "Dufort Mall." It's a "ha ha" sort of funny at this point in my life, but I will never forget watching my mom — partly out of thrift and partly out of necessity — go diving at the Dufort Dump.

My mom worked her ass off to support our family and, as a mom, I appreciate more than ever the sacrifices she made and the lengths she went to just to make sure my brother and I didn't look as broke as we were and to make sure that, always, we had food. Like all moms, mine isn't perfect, but she sewed me pretty dresses and she pawned things that were special to her to make sure my brother and I had opportunities from baseball clinics (for him) to modeling school (for me).

As an Idaho taxpayer, I am worried that the exaggerated fear of unlikely outcomes has jeopardized a system that allows families to care for themselves. As an Idaho taxpayer, I am concerned parents won't be held accountable and that the rest of us will pick up the tab through increased public assistance. I am concerned that non-custodial parents will be able to skip out on child support payments just by moving 20 miles west into Washington. I am concerned that our state will be the place where deadbeat parents can move to escape their parental obligations. As a federal taxpayer, I am pissed off that our legislators feel Idahoans — especially women and children — should reap no benefit from paying those federal taxes.

As a voter, I plan on holding our representatives accountable. As a voter, I plan on holding our governor accountable, too. The Gov. Butch Otter needs to call a special session so our legislators can clean up the mess they've made.

Taking care of our state's most vulnerable citizens — the tens of thousands of children and families who rely on child support — should be a non-partisan priority.