

Our View: Abortion is not murder, but letting your child die is

Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

A group of Idaho residents wants to change state law to make performing or having an abortion an act of first-degree murder.

The group, Abolish Abortion Idaho, is in the early stages of collecting signatures to get its proposed initiative on the November 2018 ballot. It'll need to submit at least 56,000 signatures of registered Idaho voters - which includes at least 6 percent of the total registered voters in 18 of the 35 legislative districts - to be verified by the state's county clerks by April 19, 2018.

We hope they fall well short of their goal, however, even if they do collect the signatures and receive enough support from voters to pass the initiative, we suspect the proposed change will have an extremely difficult time holding up in the court of law, at least as things stand now. Unfortunately, a shift in the makeup of the Supreme Court under reality TV star and President-elect Donald Trump could make such a law much more likely to stand up in court.

Either way, we feel criminalizing abortion is a terrible step for the state to take.

Many factors go into the decision to have an abortion, and abortion or not, it is a decision the mother will have to live with the remainder of her life. But it is a personal decision, and not one the state should have any say in.

Instead of attempting to criminalize abortion, we would ask Abolish Abortion Idaho to pursue other efforts to reduce the need for abortions - such as promoting the use of birth control and providing proper sex education and family planning to the state's residents.

We also ask, that if they care so much about life, let's start by taking care of real, live children, ensuring they have safe homes, are well fed and have access to health care and an education.

They can start with an easy effort: A ballot initiative to eliminate an Idaho law that allows parents to withhold medical care and hide behind their "religious beliefs" as their child needlessly suffers and ultimately dies.

First-degree murder charges for such "parents" sounds pretty justified.