

## **Otter declines to order investigation of Planned Parenthood**

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter said he will not launch an investigation into Planned Parenthood facilities in Idaho despite receiving a request from nearly 30 Republican state lawmakers.

In an Aug. 6 letter, Otter, also a Republican, said there are no grounds for a legal investigation because there is no evidence Planned Parenthood has violated any state or federal laws in Idaho.

Planned Parenthood has come under scrutiny after anti-abortion activists released undercover videos that raised questions about whether the national organization was profiting from the sale of fetal tissue— an accusation the group denies.

"I have been in contact with Planned Parenthood officials here in Idaho and they assured me that these practices do not occur in Idaho or within the states that make up Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest," Otter wrote.

However, his letter also challenged Planned Parenthood to reassure Idahoans that such activities do not occur in the state.

The videos have sparked calls for investigations in a handful of states. Authorities in Massachusetts, Georgia, Indiana and South Dakota found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Otter is not the first governor to turn down a call for a Planned Parenthood investigation, but he is one of the few Republican state leaders to push back against such requests from fellow GOP lawmakers.

Democratic governors in Virginia, New Hampshire, Minnesota, New York and Washington have expressed support for Planned Parenthood while refusing to investigate the health centers.

In Idaho, Planned Parenthood has health clinics in Boise, Meridian and Twin Falls.

"This is a thinly-veiled political attack against us," said Hannah Brass Greer, spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest, which includes Idaho, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii. "There was no reason to do an investigation. None of the lawmakers contacted us first to see if we had a tissue donation program."

Three members of Idaho House GOP leadership signed the investigation request sent to Otter, including House Majority Leader Mike Moyle of Star and House Assistant Majority Leader Brent Crane of Nampa.

House Speaker Scott Bedke and Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill did not sign the letter.

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