

Idaho Statesman, Wednesday, March 18, 2009 – by Kathleen Kreller

## Idaho miscarriage bill faces opposition

*Allowing certificates for early fetal deaths could lead to a lawsuit.*

At least one pro-choice group says the bill lays the groundwork for defining early fetuses as being people. An Idaho legislative committee on Tuesday approved a bill introduced by freshman Rep. Judy Boyle, R-Midvale, that would authorize certificates of early death for fetuses that die before 20 weeks of gestation.

"This would help the mom have closure on the loss of her child," Boyle said. "This is not a reportable death," either now or if the bill passes, she said.

Opponents of Boyle's bill said it is intended to pave the way for anti-abortion measures.

"We believe their real intent is to further undermine (Roe v. Wade) than real concern about families," said Rebecca Poedy, vice president of Idaho Operations for Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest. " ... If it is legally challengeable, Planned Parenthood will be doing that."

Roe v. Wade is the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortions. Poedy points to the Web sites of anti-abortion groups like the Idaho Values Alliance that are supporting House Bill 214.

But Boyle insists her intent is to provide comfort for grieving women. The bill would allow mothers who have had a miscarriage or abortion to request the certificate from Idaho's Bureau of Health Policy and Vital Statistics. The certificates would not be vital records but personal paper records.

Currently, the state issues a certificate of a stillborn death after 20 weeks of gestation. Approved by the House State Affairs Committee by a single vote, the bill now goes to the full House.

The proposed certificates don't require any of the fact-verification standards applied to other vital records like birth or marriage certificates, said James Aydelotte, the director of Idaho's vital statistics bureau, which opposes the bill, citing the possibility of fraud.