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Idaho Falls, Idaho

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by Bryan Clark

Page 1 of 1

GOP formally opposes Medicaid expansion

POCATELLO — The Idaho Republican Party formally passed a resolution this morning opposing the Medicaid expansion ballot initiative, in one of the first resolutions passed during the 2018 GOP convention. The resolution, drafted and submitted by the Bonneville County Central Committee, passed in an overwhelming voice vote, though there was a small group of dissenters.

Proponents argued that there are alternatives, such as charity care, available to the more than 60,000 Idahoans who make too little to afford subsidies on Your Health Idaho but not enough to qualify for the unexpanded Medicaid program.

“There’s a lot of options other than Medicaid expansion for people to get their health care,” said Tamara Sullivan-Watson of Ada County.

In order to qualify for the current Medicaid program, a childless couple can earn no more than \$289 per month in gross income, or about \$3,500 per year.

Ann Kossler, a delegate from rural Lemhi County, said very few residents in her county can afford health care at current prices, and Medicaid expansion offers them a chance at decent health care. Other proponents said the party would do well to respect the outcome of the coming popular vote on whether to undertake expansion.

The Medicaid expansion ballot initiative is expected to appear on the November ballot, as is an initiative to reintroduce “historical” or “instant racing.

The party passed a second resolution that instead supports the state encouraging the formation of private nonprofits to provide care to those who cannot afford it.

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