Attachment 2

Testimony on SB 1182 by Bruce Wingate March 20, 2017

Chairman Siddoway, members of the committee.

The people that I have been privileged to work with for the last several years have been trying to save Idaho children from the suffering and death they are exposed to due to their parent's legal right to deny them necessary medical treatment. Children are suffering, children are crying, children are dying because the state of Idaho allows adults to deny them life-saving medical care. Our children cannot protect themselves. When they are in danger of being harmed or dying, the state has a duty to protect them.

We believe in religious freedom and parental rights, but according to the Idaho Constitution these rights must have limits. If they are harming children they have gone beyond the limits that a civil society and a responsible government should allow.

A very courageous man wanted to be here today, Former Idaho Chief Justice and former Idaho Attorney General Jim Jones. Jim has a serious life-threating health issue preventing him from being here this morning to testify on behalf of the children, but has written a testimonial that I would like to submit to this committee.

He recently wrote an article that has been widely published in numerous Idaho newspapers. In it he states and I quote, "this is not a religious freedom issue it is a child's right to live issue. It is time for the Legislature to stand up for our children and to require that faith-healing parents provide basic healthcare to their children". I could not agree more, and pray for his speedy and complete recovery.

In our state, infants are dying during childbirth because there is no medical professional present and babies in distress aren't taken to hospitals. Children in elementary schools are dying from diabetes because they are refused insulin. Teenagers risk losing a limb or dying because they get an infection and aren't given antibiotics. Pneumonia has taken the lives of a great many children.

Hundreds of Idaho children have died from preventable illnesses.
The suffering some of these children experience is shameful.
Here is one example:

> Pamela Jade Eells – In 2011 Pamela Eells died of pneumonia at 16 years old in New Plymouth. She had long suffered from chronic osteomyelitis in her pelvic bone, which is extremely painful. It is hard for me to imangine what Pamela went through enduring this without medication. She then slowly drowned as her lungs filled with fluid.

I asked a doctor what this would be like, and he said "it would be like being water-boarded four or five times a day". Ladies and Gentlemen of the committee, in the name of humanity, please repeal these laws and allow Idaho children the right to a healthy life.

Specifically on bill 1182, we appreciate legislators finally addressing this issue. However, Protect Idaho Kids stands in strong opposition to SB1182 because it addresses parental rights but does not provide additional protection to Idaho children from medical neglect. We prefer that the state hold all adults to an equal standard when it comes to child medical neglect

without exception to a parent's religious belief. We also strongly advocate for those standards to be applied in both criminal and civil statutes. For example, we do not believe that there should be any religious exemptions for manslaughter in the criminal statute. Additionally, there is nothing in the bill to increase the likelihood of sick children getting reported. Idaho law requires people to report when they have reason to believe a child has been or will be neglected but with a religious exemption in the definition of neglect, then there is no neglect to report if the parent is withholding medical care on religious grounds.

We have serious concerns about changes that have been made to the civil code in SB 1182 that have the potential to allow for more children to die of faith-healing medical neglect than currently do today. That's because it provides neglectful parents loopholes to avoid being held accountable. For example, under SB 1182, a parent who has allowed a child to die from faith-healing medical neglect, will suffer no repercussions if he simply claims that the child refused the medical care. Other parents who briefly pray over their sick child can say that they didn't know that their child was about to become disabled or die.

Protect Idaho Kids looks forward to the day that the state grants all Idaho children equal protection from medical neglect regardless of their parent's religious beliefs.

In closing, I would like to invite this committee and everyone listening to this message to join us right here on the first floor rotunda of the Capitol building tomorrow night at 5-6pm to for a vigil to honor the right to life for ALL the children of Idaho.

Thank you