



Chronicle / Eric Luse

Eric Luse / *San Francisco Chronicle*. John Paul II holding four-year-old **Brendan O'Rourke**.

Brendan was born October 5, 1982, three months early, one pound thirteen ounces. A transfusion after birth gave him HIV; by the time the pope reached the aisle it was AIDS. He was in a blue suit in his father's arms. He called out "Hi Viva Papa," touched the pope's ear, and John Paul turned, picked him up, blessed him, and came back a second time. The line to the room was "God loves you all, without distinction, without limit." In 1987 a lot of people still would not touch a child with AIDS. The photograph answered them. Brendan later received Communion from the same pope in Rome. He did not live to grow old.

That visit does not appear in Idaho's ballot text. The **words that do** are these two definitions of whether a child "can live."

Current Idaho law — I.C. § 18-604(15)

A viable fetus is one "potentially able to live outside the mother's womb, **albeit with artificial aid.**"

Proposition 1

Fetal viability is "the point in a pregnancy when... the fetus has a significant likelihood of sustained survival outside of the uterus **without extraordinary medical measures.**"

After that point the state may regulate abortion except in a "medical emergency." Before that point abortion is written as a right. The official YES language on the ballot uses the same phrase: survive **without extraordinary medical measures.**

Current law counts a 24-week baby on a ventilator. Prop 1 lets a clinician say that same baby is not viable because the ventilator is extraordinary. Brendan lived only because people refused to treat dependence as a reason to stand away.

That is why the words on this ballot matter. Vote no on Proposition 1.