

Public Hearing - Senate Bill 318

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My Background

- Non-custodial and halftime parent
- Education
 - Bachelor of Arts degree in Education
 - Master of Business Administration Degree
 - Birth to Three, Birthing class, “Love and Logic” parenting class
- Community involvement and extensive experience with children
 - Six years of raising awareness at the State level
 - Volunteer (coaching and school activities)
- No criminal background

Core Parental Rights and Responsibilities

1. Parenting time - time spent with the child
2. Custody - decisions-making responsibilities regarding the child

My Path to Being a Halftime Parent

- Separated and divorced when my son was one year old - I wanted to be a halftime parent but my son's mother would not agree to it
- Went to five couples counselors to find an amicable transition
- Went to fifteen mediation sessions
- Had a custody evaluation that was pursued by the mother, and lost - lost more parenting time as well
- Went to court twice - had to pay the mother's attorney fees both times
- My son wrote a letter to the court - requesting his own representation
- Accepted a halftime parenting arrangement in a settlement conference - approximately ten years after the divorce

The Results

- Bonding time lost with my son
- Lost time with child development
- Consistent attempts of parental alienation
- Marginalization by the courts as the non-custodial parent and secondary caregiver
- Loss of ten's of thousands of dollars that could have gone toward my son's continued education

*All I wanted was to be an equal parent - equal opportunities and rights

The Recent Work Group

- Coordinated by the Senate Judiciary Committee chair - Senator Prozanski
- Presumption of 50/50 parenting time was not high on the priority list
 - Bill 318 was sponsored by Senator Manning and Senator Thatcher's office
- Significant resistance within the local industry and the State of Oregon - vested interests before the people

*There are approximately twenty states that have a presumption of 50/50 parenting time

*SB 318 was not enacted by the People of the State of Oregon

Conclusion

- Parental equality is in the child's best interests and welfare
- The state of Oregon and attorneys take advantage of the families that need the most assistance with a transition into two households
- Current family laws reward ulterior motives
 - A parent who is not willing to cooperate can be awarded with more parenting time, the entitlement of sole custody, and the control to alienate the other parent
 - A loaded custody dispute can also affect parenting time - even for fit parents
 - More time = more money
- Family law has the potential to discriminate - women are awarded sole custody 80.4% of the time, per the 2016 United States Census
- There needs to be more than a he said, she said dispute to take time and decision-making responsibilities away from a parent
 - A parent must be proven to be unfit
- Twenty other states got it right - why can't we?

Next Steps

- Implement a better way
 - Presumption of 50/50 parenting time, unless proven otherwise
 - Allocation of decision-making responsibilities (education, healthcare, religious training, and residence)
 - Allow children to have a legal voice - currently there is no legal age where a child can have a preference
- We are a progressive state and we need to catch up!