

Holly Burrell
March 6, 2019
Re: SB 318
Subject: Supporting Testimony

Good morning Chair Prozanski, members of the Committee. My name is Holly Burrell and I reside here in Salem. I am a teacher, a wife, a mother, a step-mother, and a lover of God, and I am here today in support of Senate Bill 318.

I myself have had the opportunity to navigate the family law system for myself, as well as with my husband, and a number of other male family and friends. I can honestly and frankly report that the results have always been the same. Two parents who love their kids, but don't get along and can't agree, go into a courtroom and spend tens of thousands of dollars (which just increases their stress, their disdain for each other, and their bickering) and at the end of the custody trial the Judge upholds the status quo – Mom gets custody because, well, historically she is the social-emotional support for kids, and Dad gets “parenting time” which often comes along with a large child support/child care bill because, well, historically dads are the financial supporters.

Well, times have changed and it is time that our court systems do too. As I mentioned before, I am a teacher and we have seen a huge increase in students with social-emotional and behavioral problems. So much so that we are teaching these skills in our classroom along with letters, numbers, and everything else you want us to teach them. So, the status quo is failing our kids. Simply put, kids need both parents, and this is backed by study after study stating the effects of an absent parent, in particular, and absent father. Well, here are all the fathers, they're not absent, many have just been pushed out by the system.

Senate Bill 318 will help give them a voice, an opportunity to be present in their kids' lives instead of just financial supporters. Senate Bill 318 isn't perfect, no bill before you ever is, but it is a necessary start. I understand that it takes a lot of courage for you to support this bill. I know that the groups that oppose this bill are powerful, wealthy, and have a lot to lose by this. You will hear from them later today and all I pray, is that you hear passed their fear of change and listen through a filter of – is the status quo what's TRULY best for the children of Oregon.

Thank you for your time, if you have any questions I would be happy to answer them.

Holly Burrell