

Support for sb318 so one parent doesn't control the other:

Last winter, my beautiful ex—the mother of my child denied me taking our son up to Portland to see my grandmother who is having open heart surgery, and I was once again reminded of the heartbreak I endured when a judge determined I'm not good enough to parent our child because I lack a vagina.

"You've done more than most fathers, Mr. Lanegan...but...In my experience, the primary caregiver is the mother..." Judge Ann Marie Simmons words rang out across the courtroom leaving a barren wasteland in my heart. Because my birth certificate said I was male, marking me as "dad" instead of "mom," I lost time with my child—every overnight for the past two years—without ever having a single civil or criminal charge against me.

As Oregon welcomes in new laws for gender on birth certificates, I wonder if I change my gender to be female, if the courts would grant me permission to have more time with our child. After all, my birth certificate would allow me to be called female, and with that title, I'd be "mom." If I changed my gender—would I then have a fighting chance? If I would, I'd be happy to dawn on a dress and lipstick—but then, would that hurt all of the transgender individuals fighting for their cause?

Perhaps the answer rests in banding together with other "non traditional" "unorthodox" "abnormal" causes and show that there is no normal in this world, there is only humanity—and every parent who doesn't harm his or her child should have the right to love, cherish and be with the child/ren who love their parents as much as the parents love the children.

This idea isn't a new one. In fact, Robin Williams dared to show the world the heartbreak of family court in a satirical piece, *Mr. Doubtfire*. When watching the movie as a single man, the humor caught me as implausible and made to entertain. Now, after being flung into the courtroom arena, being called a fake and liar, much like *Doubtfire*, I wonder if the man who wrote the movie, attaching it to homosexuality and transgender movements had a point—moms get the kids because it's the traditional way, it's just normal. As the LGBTQ+ movement is making progress in helping build a new normal, maybe we should tear a few pages from their art of war manual.