



CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
MULTNOMAH COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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PORTLAND, OR 97204-1123

MAUREEN McKNIGHT
JUDGE

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COMMENTS ON SB 385-3 — PARENTING TIME CONFERENCE

Submitted for Work Session of the Senate Judiciary Committee of the Oregon Legislature
March 21, 2019

Submitted by:
Maureen McKnight, Circuit Court Judge
Multnomah County

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

I am a Family Court Judge in Multnomah County. I previously submitted testimony on SB 385 as introduced, supporting the concept but suggesting changes to make the Parenting Time Conference an informal one. I spoke then, as I do now, on my own behalf and as a member of the legislative workgroup that addressed these issues this past interim.

I support the Dash 3 amendments, as they set out the changes I suggested. They provide for a program optional for courts and informal in procedure for the parents, many (if not most) of whom I expect will be self-represented. Meeting with a trained court staff member or court-approved attorney or mediator in a Parenting Time Conference would provide another opportunity to parents (after mediation) to discuss the parenting time dispute with a trained 3rd person, perhaps try interim steps suggested by the Conference Officer and report back, and ultimately to receive a recommendation from the Officer or prepare a stipulated order. No party would lose his or her right to hearing but the Court would be able to review the recommendation and give it whatever weight the court felt appropriate.

The Dash 3 amendments also provide the parties an opportunity to review with an attorney they choose any agreements reached with the Conference Officer. I support that as well.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maureen McKnight".

MAUREEN McKNIGHT, Circuit Court Judge

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Nancy Cozine and Phil Lehman, State Court Administrator's Office
Addie Smith, Senate Judiciary Counsel