

Good morning Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Representatives:

My name is Joshua Bacher, I live in Newport, and I work for Lincoln County Planning and Development. I am testifying in favor of Senate Bill 318, the bill that adds very impactful text, or variations thereof, to Family Law proceedings, which reads: Presume, subject to rebuttal, that equal parenting time is in the best interests of the child.

I have been divorced from my children's Mother since 2005, and like many, we disagreed on the Parenting Plan and custody, a disagreement which unfortunately continues to this day. It is worth noting that I have had full custody of my children twice, but not initially, and not currently. It has been a very time consuming and costly process, which could have been easily avoided had Senate Bill 318 been in effect more than a decade ago.

I realize that by having children aged 15 and 16, it is likely this Bill will not be fruitful for me specifically, but if I can be a voice for other Fathers (and Mothers) that have been treated unfairly in Family Court, then I will be happy to help.

I also believe that, in a day and age where gender equality has become so important, it's an appropriate time for the State of Oregon to consider the ramifications of that, and not simply automatically find in favor of the Mother. I implore any Family Court system to truly establish that equal parenting time is in the best interests of the child.

In closing, I want to thank Senator Thatcher for sponsoring this bill and offer encouragement to the other parents that have been impacted by family law: hang in there, our voices are being heard. I only wish that I had some more advanced notice so I could have made arrangements to be off of work today. Again, I fully support this Bill.

Respectfully,

Josh Bacher