

RE: HB 2959

Important decision making rights in Oregon already established for those 14 and older:

1. Emerging adults (let's call them that because that is what they are) - Emerging Adults, in Oregon under ORS 109.328<sup>1</sup> at age 14 must give consent to other important family situations such as being adopted.
2. Emerging adults starting at age 14 in the state of Oregon under ORS 109.675<sup>1</sup> have a right to diagnosis or treatment for mental or emotional disorder or chemical dependency without parental consent.

However, family court often tramples on these emerging adults (age 14 and older) by overriding the rights already established by legislation. This is done in custody cases for the sake of conforming to a parenting plan that undermines the rights of the children and often undermines the rights of Oregon Families to parent their children as they wish.

In other states (Georgia, West Virginia) those age 14 and older ALREADY have the right to choose the custodial parent. In California, those 14 and older have the right to testify in court. In MOST other states (Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin) children even as young as 12 have a voice that is taken into consideration by the courts (see references).

Oregon has fallen behind the rest of the nation in its Children's Rights Movement. Please allow children to have a voice and choice regarding their own family, safety, and daily living situations.

Please pass HB 2959

Sincerely,  
Deirdra Eden

References:

<https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/109.675>

<https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/109.328>

<https://www.divorcewriter.com/child-preference-in-custody>