

I am a Senior Circuit Court Judge, having recently retired from the Washington County Circuit Court bench after 19 years. I served as Chief Family Judge for over 10 years. I have practiced family law representing parents, children and third party claimants since 1977 until I was appointed to the bench in 2001. I have 3 now grown children two of whom have heir own children. I speak from my own experience as a lawyer, judge and parent.

Oregon law has long supported the principal of promoting parent/child relationships. Developmentally, most teenagers are moving away from the parent-child relationship as they would prefer time with peers or just doing what they want. Requiring child consent for a parenting plan affords the child too much control.

On the other hand, the Court of Appeals in Albar and Najjar, 272 Or App 146 (2018) reversed a judgment which allows older teens to decide if they would attend parenting time with a parent who had abandoned them years before, had engaged in domestic violence against the custodian, and who had threatened to take them to the middle East. The children were afraid of the non-custodian and their attorney recommended that they be able to have such contact with the non-custodian as they felt was comfortable.

So I support the idea of a bill that would allow a trial court ruling that the children can determine contact if there is good cause for doing so. This is a good vehicle for that discussion.