

Submitter: Ayla Hofler  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB313

I am in favor of SB 313. Children have an accurate, intuitive sense of which parent provides consistent advocacy for them and which parent consistently participates in their lives.

As a health science teacher (BS), a nurse (BS) of 40 years, and a minister (M.Div); I would expand this bill to allow a child at the end of 3rd. grade to decide what parent they reside in based on school week or a 5/2 rotation schedule. They definitely need to decide by high school, so the end of 8th grade, which parent they will reside with in or out of state and may be 100% of the time with that parent until they turn 18.

I would add that any child currently in a custody situation may approach the court with the same legal right to choose. Many children are currently suffering under past court custody determinations. Yes, there would be some temporary demand on the court system, these children deserve the same (equitable) right to exercise their right to choose.

Oregon should become a 50/50 joint custody default state. Many court cases would never see the courts if the promise of a child support check can be obtained, or not have to pay at all if not working could be recognized. Assigning a parent to be decision maker over education and one over health care is necessary. These would be effected by a child's choice.

Being the decision maker over these important aspects of a child's life needs some limitations like altering their body without disease etiology or picking an unrecognized educational program as a place to learn recognized competencies.

Yes, children may choose a parent because they will have fewer rules and less oversight or even based on a particular issue such as changing gender or a parent's faith.

Where the child lives does not give that parent sole right to decide the health care or education plan of the child. A child's decision to alter their body, sex, or take irreversible medications to change themselves needs to be deferred until child reaches 18 and makes that choice. Joint custody can offer a dialog with both parents on these vital topics and protect the child from damaging decisions.

Please allow all children in the state of Oregon to have this law to protect their right to choose the time they spend with their parents; as soon as age 9, (or end of 3rd grade) and at age 13, (or end of 8th grade). This will stabilize their education and social development and allow a child dealing with divorced parents, to seek the most nurturing and promising environment to thrive.

Thank you,

Ayla Hofler BS, M.Div.