

SENATOR LANDIS: ..the body of the bill.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Then I would address that to Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: (Inaudible).

SENATOR BEUTLER: I'm sorry, Senator Ashford, the question is this. After the parenting plan has been approved and submitted to the respective attorneys for the parties who then, in turn, are obligated to submit it to the court, is the court then obligated to incorporate that one way or another into the decree, or not?

SENATOR ASHFORD: No, they are not required to do that. If it does require that, I think the answer to that question, and that's a policy question, Senator Beutler, and...well, just a second. I think I'm right. They are not required to do so and that's my intent, that they not be required to do so, that it not be public, necessarily public information filed with the decree in the court file.

SENATOR BEUTLER: So the court could approve, reject, modify...

SENATOR ASHFORD: It's not required...

SENATOR BEUTLER: I guess I'm looking to what the legal status is of that plan, if they do not incorporate into the decree. They can do that either with or without reference to the plan?

SENATOR ASHFORD: The specific answer to your question is that a parenting plan is not necessarily binding on the trial court and the trial court can amend it or suggest amendments. It's like a...I suppose it's like a stipulation on...in any child custody agreement that would be reached now, that it's always subject to the best interests of the children and the court would be the final arbiter of that issue.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay, so the court...

SENATOR WARNER: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...the court is free to, let's say the court rejects the plan.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right.