

Home Schooling Not a 'Right,' Says US Justice Department

In a brief for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, the Attorney General of the United States, Eric Holder, made assertions that are alarming from the standpoint of defending **religious freedom**.

In a brief for a political asylum case involving a persecuted, German home-schooling family, Holder asserted that a parent's right to educate his or her child is not fundamental, and is only breached if the right is removed from all people. This assertion contradicts earlier claims by the U.S. government that religion and freedom to practice it is an individual right.

The government's argument first defined the home-schooling issue as one of citizens receiving equal rights under the law, and because Germany bans home schooling entirely, the home-schooled family's rights are not violated. This is an incorrect definition according to Sam Rohrer, who states that God ordained that authority and primary responsibility for education lies with parents. Secondly, the Bill of Rights including the **First Amendment**, all recognize individual rights, not group rights.

Rohrer, president of the Pennsylvania Pastors' Network, says if Holder's arguments are applied to United States citizens, individual, natural rights given by God will be directly assaulted.

"This entire issue is a matter of 'jurisdiction'" said Rohrer. "The question is, who has the God-given and Constitutionally recognized right or authority to make the decisions about the upbringing of children?"

"Scripture tells us throughout both the Old and New Testaments

that parents are to teach their children and that they have primary responsibility for this. Deuteronomy 4 and 11 both instruct parents to continually teach their children about God and His laws, and Ephesians 6:4 tells Christians to bring up children 'in the training and instruction of the Lord,' which encompasses all areas of life, not only spiritual training.

"In addition," Rohrer adds, "God has ordained that civil government is limited in its duties to the ministry of justice and the ministry of defense (Rom. 13). Our own Constitution gives no authority to civil government to attack or supersede parental authority granted by God and natural rights.

"One need not belong to a church or a protected group to whom equal rights must be granted in order to follow the Bible's teaching; as such, freedom for parents to follow the Bible in educating children is a fundamental, individual right protected by the First Amendment and must be defended not attacked by the government and the [attorney general]," he concluded.