

Homeschool Parents May Lose Child Custody Permanently

In a monumental development for homeschool rights, Swedish parents may permanently lose custody of their child. The implications of the controversial case are enough to send chills down the spine of anyone who chooses to homeschool their children.

Swedish officials on the Island of Gotland are moving to terminate the parental rights of homeschool parents Christer and Annie Johansson. The state seized 7-year-old Domenic in June 2009. Currently 9 years old, the boy has been held in state foster care for more than 24 months. Domenic's entire family has been denied virtually any contact with him during that time.

Now, the state wants to give permanent custody to the foster family.

"The United States Supreme Court has called the termination of parental rights the family court equivalent of the death penalty," says Michael Donnelly, director of International Relations at the Home School Legal Defense Association, or HSLDA.

HSLDA and the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) filed a joint application on behalf of the Johansson family at the European Court of Human Rights in June 2010 and have been working to support the family since shortly after Domenic's seizure. The groups are now urging supporters to write letters in hopes of renewing attention to the family's case and to encourage Swedish officials to release Domenic back to his family.

"The government shouldn't abduct and imprison children simply because it doesn't like homeschooling. That's bad enough. But now the state is going even further by attempting to get the

parents out of the way altogether,” says ADF legal counsel Roger Kiska. “This simply cannot stand. We will do everything in our power to help reunite this family.”

Download sample letters you can send to the government.