

Pentecostal Faith Healers Lose Reckless Homicide Appeal

The Wisconsin Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the homicide convictions of a mother and father who prayed for their dying daughter instead of seeking medical care.

Madeline Neumann, 11, died in 2008 from undiagnosed diabetes at her home in Weston, Wisconsin. Her parents, Dale and Leilani Neumann, were convicted in separate trials of second-degree reckless homicide.

The couple's lawyers appealed the convictions. They contended that state law allowed the Neumanns, who identify themselves as Pentecostal Christians, to treat the girl's illness with prayer and protected them from being charged with child abuse.

The Neumanns' attorneys also alleged in part that jury instructions were erroneous.

In a 6-1 decision, the justices ruled that state laws on child abuse and reckless homicide "provide sufficient notice that the parents' conduct could have criminal consequences if their daughter died."

The justices also ruled that the jury instructions were correct.