

Supreme Court of Sweden Asked to Free Abducted Home-Schooled Boy

Sweden's highest court is being asked to free an 11-year-old boy whom government officials have held in captivity for four years because his parents home-schooled him.

Attorneys with Alliance Defending Freedom and the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) are legal advisers to the parents, who are represented by Ruby Harrold-Claesson of the Nordic Committee for Human Rights.

Social services authorities placed Domenic Johansson in foster care and a government school in 2009 and rarely allowed his parents, Christer and Annie Johansson, to visit him. The government cut off all visitation the following year. The appeal to the Supreme Court of Sweden comes after a midlevel appellate court reversed a lower court's ruling that had restored parental rights to Domenic's parents.

"The government shouldn't abduct and imprison children—and especially not because it doesn't like home-schooling," says Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Legal Counsel Roger Kiska. "Instead of protecting its citizens, Sweden's government has become a frightening threat. There is no justification for taking a child away from his parents for four years simply because the parents wanted to educate their child at home. This is a tragedy and injustice of epic proportions, and we are asking Sweden's highest court to right this egregious wrong."

"After the district court victory, we had hoped the end of this nightmare was approaching," says HSLDA's director of international relations, Mike Donnelly, one of more than 2,200

allied attorneys with Alliance Defending Freedom. “As the district court found, Annie and Christer Johansson are good parents. It is unconscionable that the court of appeals—or any court in a democratic country like Sweden—could somehow think that it is in Domenic’s best interest to remain separated from his parents. The pain, suffering and harm done to this family are incalculable.”

Swedish authorities forcibly removed Domenic from his parents in June 2009 from a plane they had boarded to move to Annie’s home country of India. The officials did not have a warrant, nor did they charge the Johanssons with any crime. The officials seized the child because he was home-schooled, even though home-schooling was legal in Sweden at the time Domenic was taken into custody.

Alliance Defending Freedom and HSLDA are encouraging concerned people all over the world to participate in an HSLDA-sponsored letter-writing campaign that asks the Supreme Court of Sweden to accept the case *Johansson v. Gotland Social Services* and return Domenic to his parents.