

# HSLDA

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29 October 2007

Frau Senatorin Renate Jurgens-Pieper  
Senatorin für Bildung und Wissenschaft  
Rembertiring 8-12  
D-28195 Bremen  
Germany

Concern: The Neubronner case

Dear Frau Senatorin:

By way of introduction, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is an international organization located in the United States. Our mission is to advance and protect the right of parents to teach their children at home. Presently, we have more than 83,000 member families in all 50 states and in 36 countries.

In support of the Neubronner family, we are informed that they would like to homeschool their children and that while you previously allowed them to do so you are refusing to permit them to homeschool this year. We are writing to ask you to grant an exception to the Bremen City-State Schulpflicht for the Neubronners.

Also, we encourage you to use your influence to modify the Bremen City-State Schulpflicht to make homeschooling possible for anyone who chooses it. To deny parents the right to homeschool their children is to deny them a basic and fundamental human right. Bremen City-State Schulpflicht could set an example for your whole nation, establishing respect for the rights of parents and children to be home educated.

As you know, the Treaty of Amsterdam calls for respect for the fundamental rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and formalizes the judgments of the European Court of Justice on such matters. These same rights are solemnly proclaimed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, most notably Article 6 (Right to liberty and security of person), Article 7 (Respect for private and family life), Article 10 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion), Article 14 (Right to education), Article 20 (Equality before the law), Article 21 (Non-discrimination), Article 22 (Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity), Article 24 (Rights of the child), and Article 47 (Right to an effective remedy and a fair trial). All of these items indicate that homeschooling should be possible for those who choose it. Germany is unique among all civilized countries in Europe who treat home education so harshly.

HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

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The United Nations called for reform in Germany in a special report to the General Assembly, by Special Rapporteur Vernor Munoz. In section 62 of the report's findings Mr. Munoz writes that "[a]ccording to reports received, it is possible that, in some Länder, education is understood exclusively to mean school attendance. Even though the Special Rapporteur is a strong advocate of public, free and compulsory education, it should be noted that education may not be reduced to mere school attendance and that educational processes should be strengthened to ensure that they always and primarily serve the best interests of the child. Distance learning methods and home schooling represent valid options which could be developed in certain circumstances, bearing in mind that parents have the right to choose the appropriate type of education for their children, as stipulated in article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The promotion and development of a system of public, government-funded education should not entail the suppression of forms of education that do not require attendance at a school. In this context, the Special Rapporteur received complaints about threats to withdraw the parental rights of parents who chose home-schooling methods for their children."

The report's recommendations section 93(g) notes "[t]hat the necessary measures should be adopted to ensure that the home schooling system is properly supervised by the State, thereby upholding the right of parents to employ this form of education when necessary and appropriate, bearing in mind the best interests of the child;"

Scientific research and practical experience all over the world has conclusively proven that homeschooling is at least as effective, in many cases more so, than public schools. A recent review of research on the effectiveness of homeschooling was conducted by the Fraser Institute of Canada at:

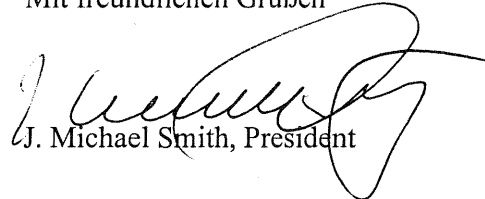
[http://www.fraserinstitute.org/Commerce.Web/product\\_files/Homeschooling.pdf](http://www.fraserinstitute.org/Commerce.Web/product_files/Homeschooling.pdf)

For additional research you can also visit <http://www.hslda.org/research/default.asp>

We urge you to grant permission for the Neubronners to homeschool their children and rescind the Zwangsgeld against them. Also, please take whatever steps you can to change Bremen Schulpflicht so that the right of parents to homeschool their children is protected.

Thank you for your anticipated attention to our request.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



J. Michael Smith, President