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Give a child a family: stop discrimination and bias against foster and adoptive parents

Tens of thousands of Canadian children go to bed each night without a loving mom and dad to tuck them in. Whether orphaned, or homeless, or victims of abuse or of broken homes, these kids spend their lives in government care. That is tragedy enough. The greater tragedy, however, is that many children could finally find a real home with a loving family, if the government would stop disqualifying good foster parents and good adoptive parents due to petty ideological bias. With disturbing frequency, government foster care and adoption services reject and discriminate against qualified families seeking to adopt or foster because of those families' religious beliefs. These agencies all too often betray the trust of the children in their care, as well as the constitutional rights of prospective foster and adoptive parents.

In March of 2016, the Hamilton Children's Aid Society ordered that the foster home of Derek and Frances Baars be closed, and the girls in their care removed, because Derek and Frances refused to tell the girls in their care that the Easter Bunny was real. For the antiquated belief that it was wrong to lie, the Baars lost the children that they loved and cared for, and the children lost their home.

Fortunately, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice has declared that the Hamilton Children's Aid Society violated the *Charter* rights of the Baars. However, other foster and adoptive families are still being torn apart because governments disrespect traditional moral and religious beliefs of foster parents and adoptive parents.

WE the citizens and taxpayers of Canada call upon provincial governments to put clear rules in place to ensure that public adoption and foster care services respect foster and adoptive families' *Charter*-protected freedom of conscience and religion, so that children will not be removed from loving homes on account of those families' moral or religious beliefs.

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