M.C. and J.C. v. Indiana Department of Child Services: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

2019
TEEN IDENTIFIES AS TRANSGENDER
Mary and Jeremy Cox, a faithful Catholic couple, are told by their biological son, A.C., that he identifies as transgender. They seek help for his health struggles.

2021
INDIANA OFFICIALS LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION
DCS begins an investigation after receiving a report that the Coxes are not referring to their child by his preferred name and pronouns.

Later in 2021
INDIANA ABANDONS ABUSE ALLEGATIONS, KEEPS CUSTODY ANYWAY
At additional hearings, DCS admits that all allegations of abuse and neglect are unsubstantiated. But state officials nevertheless argue that A.C. can’t go home because the disagreement over gender identity is causing A.C.’s eating disorder to worsen, even though that eating disorder worsened once A.C. was removed from Mary and Jeremy’s custody.

June 2021
INDIANA REMOVES TEEN FROM HIS FAMILY HOME
The trial court holds a removal hearing where DCS argues that A.C. “should be in a home where she is [ac]cepted for who she is.” The trial court upholds the removal, placing A.C. in a transition-affirming home and imposing a gag order on Mary and Jeremy that restricts their visitation time and bars them from speaking to their child about their religious views on sex and gender.

2022
THE COURT OF APPEALS UPHOLDS THE REMOVAL
In 2022, an appeals court upheld A.C.’s removal, reasoning that the Coxes’ First Amendment rights did not apply to private speech in the home.

Mary and Jeremy Cox appeal to the Supreme Court
Becket and Joshua Hershberger of Hershberger Law Office asked the Justices to protect Mary, Jeremy, and parents nationwide from living in fear that government officials can take away their children because of parents’ religious beliefs about gender. The Coxes fear that Indiana could remove their other children from their home, and that other loving parents throughout the nation may lose custody of their children too.

March 2024
THE SUPREME COURT DECIDES NOT TO TAKE UP THE COXES’ CASE
Mary and Jeremy plan to continue the fight for parental rights and religious freedom, so that this nightmare doesn’t happen to other families.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CASE: