

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and SB 18 – “Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in California” - Not Good for Children, Parents, Families or Society

Talk at Rally Held January 17 in front of the State Capitol

By Orlean Koehle

I represent a state and national conservative organization called Eagle Forum that has always been pro-family, pro-life, pro-traditional American values, and definitely pro-parental rights. We strongly support the US Constitution and Bill of Rights. We believe that our rights come from God not government; therefore, the government does not have any right to take those rights away. There is a trick question that a friend of mine asks – “How many rights does the Constitution grant to us?” The answer is zero. The Constitution does not grant rights. It is there to protect and secure our God-given rights. And one of those rights is our right as parents to make wise choices for our children and to raise our children as we deem correct. Government should not usurp those rights and become the parent for the children.

I have seen the outcome of the UN Rights of the Child Convention (CRC), or Treaty, in Germany where my husband was born and reared and where we lived for three years. Germany ratified the CRC early on in 1992, three years after it was created in 1989 by the United Nations. The CRC has since been ratified by 195 other nations. The United States is the only nation that has refused to adopt it, mainly because we believe in freedom and in God-given parental rights.

However, one California senator thinks differently. Senator Richard Pan is the author of SB 18, which is based on the UN CRC, with almost the same language. Senator Pan is the one who authored and led the battle to pass into law SB 277 last year, the controversial mandatory vaccination bill, another anti-parental rights bill. Here are some of the provisions stated in both the CRC and in SB 18. I tell of the impact that these provisions have on parental rights in Germany. Is this what we want for parents in California?

Decline in Religious Influence: “Parents must act in the best interest of the child.” In Germany, this is interpreted to mean that “imposing their religious beliefs on their children is not in the best interests if the child does not want to go to church.” This caused parents to no longer have the right to take their children to church – that was “imposing their religious values on their children against their will.” So therefore, we have generations of children growing up without religion and without morals in Germany.

We were in Germany and four other European countries last summer. It was amazing to see how many of the Christian churches are now standing empty. Except for a few elderly parishioners, hardly anyone attends church. Consequently, thousands of the churches are being sold for some other purpose – no longer as a house of worship. They are either museums, concert halls, or being used for outlandish other uses such as the St. Joseph Church in Arnhem, Holland, which is now a skate board park, or the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, built in 1309, which now stands in the middle of the Red Light area and is being used as a brothel. Many of the churches are being sold as Muslim mosques.

Decline in Respect for Teachers: For three years, back in the 1970s my husband and I and two children lived in northern Germany where Kurt taught at a German Gymnasium, which is a sort of advanced high school – more like a High School/Junior College combined. Back in the 1970s, the students would all stand when the teacher entered the room. There was great respect and regard shown for a teacher. Now,

according to Kurt's cousin, Johanna, who was a teacher and later a principal of a private school in Germany, the UN Rights of the Child law had affected educators' ability to discipline or correct their students. Students no longer rise when a teacher enters the classroom and little respect is shown compared to what it used to be.

Decline in Respect for Parents and Loss of Parental Authority to Say No to their Children::

Johanna said that under the "right to social and emotional well-being," children now demand things of their parents that earlier would never have been allowed. Johanna and her husband could not say no to their son when he decided, at age 16, that "for his social and emotional wellbeing," it was his right to bring his girlfriend home to live with them, which is what happened. Johanna was greatly distraught about this and it affected all of the family's relationships. Her marriage later ended in divorce.

Home Schooling Outlawed: It was because of the CRC's "right to appropriate, quality education" that home schooling has continued to be outlawed in Germany. It was originally outlawed in 1918, but made stricter by the UN CRC. Any family who tries to home school has their children taken from them. Remember the story of Uwe and Hannelore Romeike and their seven children who fled to America in 2008 seeking asylum because of this? What happened to them? The Supreme Court refused to hear the case, and at first they were going to be deported, but thanks to the help of the Home School Legal Defense Fund, HDLF, the family was able to stay here. They are now living in Morristown, Tennessee, where Uwe Romeike is a music teacher and serves as the pianist at the First Baptist Church, the church which strongly supports home schooling and is helping the Romeike family along with 60 other children.

HDLF helped to get legislation passed to protect the Romeike family and other home school families. Here is what was written about this legislation by a Mr. Webster of the HLDF:

"America is a country that protects freedom. The right of parents to educate their children is a fundamental human right that is internationally acknowledged. This legislation strengthens these opportunities by providing protection for families facing persecution at the hands of their own government and protects their right to practice the basic liberties to educate and nurture their own children."

If SB 18 passes in California, will we have families fleeing our state having to seek asylum someplace else, because they can no longer legally home school here?

Mandatory Vaccinations will Affect all Families: Here in California, some parents have chosen to home school to avoid the mandatory vaccinations of all children who attend public school as SB277 requires. With the passage of SB 18, however, and "the right to appropriate, quality health care," which is interpreted to mean children must have access to full vaccinations, if a parent refuses, then their children can be taken away by Child Protective Services. In Germany, parents have no choice. All children are vaccinated, no matter what. Again, in California, for those parents who disagree and refuse, will they have to flee to another state which still grants parental freedom and the right to say no?

SB 18 is a Total Violation of Parental Rights and Not Good for Families or Society. From what we can learn from other countries, this bill is not good for children, for parents, for families or society. It is turning children against parents. It is weakening families not strengthening them. A strong family structure is the foundation of a strong society. **Please contact your state senators and urge them to say**

no to SB 18 and to withdraw it from moving any further!