

Socialist Sweden Moves to Ban Homeschooling for Religious or Philosophical Reasons

Government accused of "showing off its worst totalitarian socialist roots".

By Hilary White

STOCKHOLM, August 11, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The Swedish Association for Home Education (ROHUS) is asking for support from the international community to stop an attempt by the Swedish government to outlaw homeschooling. The new legislation argues that because a child's education should be "comprehensive and objective" it must be "designed so that all pupils can participate, regardless of what religious or philosophical" views of parents or children.

The government's explanation of the draft law says, "there is no need for the law to offer the possibility of homeschooling because of religious or philosophical reasons in the family."

On June 15 the Swedish government unveiled the draft legislation which, if passed, would impose severe restrictions on parents wishing to homeschool their children. Citing the European Convention on Human Rights, the law only allows parents to homeschool if "extraordinary circumstances" exist. The programme being used must pass muster with state officials and authorities will inspect and monitor home schooling families. Permission to homeschool must be renewed each year.

The final law will be presented to Parliament during the spring of 2010 and if passed, will take effect in 2011.

ROHUS said the legislation represents "a return to darkness". The group noted the irony that the law, ostensibly based on the European Convention on Human Rights, proposes to outlaw homeschooling on religious or philosophical grounds. Article 9 of the Convention guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the right to manifest a religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

The Swedish Government, the group says, "is making homeschooling illegal, for religious or philosophical reasons, thus showing off its worst totalitarian socialist roots". They are calling for international support "to show that Sweden, as a member of the international democratic community, cannot take such a position".

"As Sweden is often seen as the great social utopia of the world, it is important for Swedish homeschoolers to win this battle. Any and all help is appreciated immeasurably."

Parents who homeschool children in Sweden consistently report that the state-run schools are in a state of chaos due to their adoption of trendy "progressive" educational theories that have been out of use in other countries for years. At the website of Trivium Pursuit, a website that provides resources for homeschoolers interested in classical Christian education, a group of expatriate British, American and Australian parents wrote of their experiences with homeschooling in Sweden.

One American woman wrote to say that the government's officially socialist educational philosophy has hampered any possible pursuit of excellence. "[N]o one could be 'better' than anyone else in their gifted areas, so there are no competitions like we have in the US, like the science fairs, etc."

Another wrote that "the Swedish school system still has not realized that the rest of the world changed curriculum directions some time ago". One English mother, married to a Swedish man, said she was worried about the impact of the Swedish system that eschews traditional grading systems on their son. "Our main worry is the 'no-one should aspire to be better' mentality that pervades here in schools and the bullying which is increasing dramatically."

To contact the Swedish education ministry directly
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<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/aug/09081104.html>