



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 24, 2026

Christians in Vermont Can Be Foster Parents Again

Vermont has rescinded a policy that denied foster-care licenses to families who did not subscribe to the LGBTQ agenda in the face of a lawsuit from two Christian couples who lost their licenses.

Brian and Katy Wuoti and Bryan and Rebecca Gantt [filed suit](#) in federal court in 2024 after their foster-care licenses were revoked because, as Christians, they refused to toe the LGBTQ line.

Licenses Lost

Prior to 2022, the Wuotis and Gantts were star foster parents with the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF). Both couples had adopted children they'd fostered; the Gantts even sought out babies born with fetal alcohol syndrome or drug dependencies. The department loved the Gantts so much it booked them on the *Today* show to talk about how the 2022 baby-formula shortage was affecting foster families.

However, as [The New American](#) reported when their lawsuit was filed:

The moment of truth occurred when the families' foster-care licenses came up for renewal in 2022 [and 2024]. In the years since they had last renewed their licenses, the department had instituted new policies regarding LGBTQ children.

First came internal guidance for staff to follow when placing such children. It recommended encouraging foster families to "support children's identities even if it feels uncomfortable," "bring young people to LGBTQ organizations and events in the community," "support young people's gender expression," and "believe that youth can have a happy future as an LGBTQ adult." It further stated that caregivers should use "appropriate pronouns" and a "preferred name" when referring to transgender kids.

Later, the department decided to enforce these rules on all foster families, declaring that "under no circumstances will the state licensing authority grant a variance" from them.

When the Wuotis and Gantts sought to renew their licenses, they were asked to rate themselves as to how "accepting and supportive of an LGBTQ foster child" they would be. The Wuotis rated themselves low enough to lose their license summarily. The Gantts' self-rating didn't doom them, but when they told their resource coordinator they could not abide by the policy, their license was also revoked.



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Suing for Cease

Represented by attorneys from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the couples took the state to court.

They contended that the policy violated their First Amendment rights to freedom of religion and association. The policy, they argued, “substantially burdens [their] religious exercise by forcing them to choose between the opportunity to become foster and adoptive parents and staying true to their religious convictions.”

The couples further asserted that the policy violated the 14th Amendment’s due-process clause because it discriminated against those with certain religious viewpoints. In fact, it “categorically excludes applicants with religious beliefs the Department disfavors,” they wrote.

“Vermont’s foster-care system is in crisis: There aren’t enough families to care for vulnerable kids and children born with drug dependencies have nowhere to call home. Yet Vermont is putting its ideological agenda ahead of the needs of these suffering kids,” ADF Legal Counsel Johannes Widmalm-Delphonse [said](#) at the time.

A year ago, U.S. District Judge William Sessions III, an appointee of former President Bill Clinton, [denied](#) the couples’ request for a preliminary injunction against the policy. The couples appealed to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Policy Permutation

But before that court could hear the case, DCF decided to settle with the plaintiffs both by restoring the Wuotis’ and Gantts’ licenses and by implementing a new policy that no longer conditions licensure on adherence to the LGBTQ line.

Under the [new policy](#), “The foster care application process does not require applicants to adopt, express, or endorse specific beliefs, viewpoints, or language as a condition of approval.” Furthermore:

Applicants’ sincerely held personal, cultural, religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs shall not be considered in the licensing process. Applicants shall not be excluded based on any such beliefs nor on an intent to live, parent, and make day-to-day caregiving decisions consistent with those beliefs, so long as required standards of safety, care, non-discrimination, and respect for a child’s safety, well-being, and dignity are met.

While there is some wiggle room for a particularly hardline bureaucrat to deny a license — believing, for example, that Christian parents might “discriminate” against a gender-confused child — DCF does appear to be making a good-faith effort to rectify the situation that led to the delicensing of two of its favorite families.

Now the department seems to want to concentrate on making sure children are placed with families that DCF believes (rightly or wrongly) will best support them:

Applicants may identify comfort levels, preferences, or areas where they feel less prepared. These do not affect licensure. Instead, they help guide later placement decisions, which consider the needs and identities of actual children and youth — not hypothetical situations.

Foster kids with gender issues may therefore end up in families that will encourage their



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“transitioning,” but at least Christian couples won’t be put in the position of having to choose between their faith and their foster family.

Wise Counsel

Calling the settlement “an incredible victory for children in Vermont’s foster-care system,” Widmalm-Delphonse said in a Monday press release:

No parent should be forced to lie to a vulnerable child about who they are, much less promote irreversible and life-altering procedures that don’t have any proven health benefits.... We commend Vermont for respecting the religious diversity of foster parents and ending its exclusionary policy that deprived children of opportunities to find loving homes.



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