



United States Mission to the OSCE

Session 3 - Right of Reply Exercised Response to Statement by the Russian Federation

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Robert Bradtke
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Any case of child neglect or abuse is one too many. We are deeply disturbed by information revealed in recent reports of parents who advertise their children online and turn over physical custody to other individuals without the safeguards of state or local government oversight. As an open society we rely on information from a variety of sources, including the media. The Reuters/NBC reports highlighted examples in which this practice put the welfare of vulnerable children at extreme risk. The United States takes very seriously the welfare of all children and strongly condemns any abuse or neglect of a child.

Over the past ten years, U.S. families have welcomed more than 200,000 adopted children into their homes from more than 100 different countries, including 60,000 from Russia. These children come from difficult environments in their countries of origin, in which, for various reasons, they do not receive the care and love of a family that every child deserves. The vast majority of these adoptions are successful and result in the permanent placement of children into loving homes. Experience shows that same-sex parents can – and in millions of families do – deliver the care and love that a child needs.

Children who were adopted from other countries have the same rights, protections, and access to services as children born in the United States. Our criminal laws draw no distinction between those who harm their natural-born children and those who harm adopted children, or any child for that matter. Child welfare issues concerning all children in the United States are under the jurisdiction of state and local authorities. The United States provides and facilitates direct communication between foreign governments and local and state authorities when foreign governments bring to our attention concerns for the welfare of a child.

As we address these issues, we should remember that it is not in the interest of children to allow a handful of tragedies to stop us from finding loving homes for thousands of deserving children.