



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 16, 2019

Months After Police Raid, Arizona Parents Granted Custody of Their Children

Two parents in Chandler, Arizona, have been granted [custody](#) over their children months after the kids were taken into state custody because the parents failed to bring their sick toddler to the hospital. Despite the custody order, however, the state continues to retain all decision-making authority over the children.

Approximately three months ago, police officers raided the home of Sarah Beck and Brooks Bryce (shown) and took their children into state custody because the couple failed to heed a doctor's suggestion to bring their two-year-old toddler, Heber, to the doctor.



On February 25, Beck, who was pregnant at the time but has since delivered her fourth baby, and her partner, Bryce, had taken Heber to the doctor for a fever of 105 degrees and were instructed by the doctor to bring the baby to the hospital because Heber was unvaccinated and the doctor feared the child had meningitis. The doctor reportedly called the hospital to alert them to the child's arrival, but by the time Beck had left the doctor's office, she states that the child was markedly improved and that his temperature had dropped dramatically.

Beck decided a trip to the emergency room was unnecessary. The parents also noted that an emergency room visit would have cost them \$2,500, money that they did not see fit to spend for a child that appeared to be healthy and recovering.

By the time Heber went to bed that evening, his temperature was down to 100 degrees.

Upon learning that the parents did not bring Heber to the hospital, the child's pediatrician contacted the Department of Child Safety (DCS), which then enlisted the help of local police. The police arrived at the family's home late that evening and were told that there was a "temporary custody order" from a judge to remove the child. At that point, with no answer from the parents inside the home, the police kicked down the door to the family's home bearing shields and weapons, and forcibly removed the children — Heber and two other children, all of whom were found to have the same symptoms.

Officers later learned that the parents had not answered the door because they were sleeping in the room with their sick children.

The story sparked immediate controversy over government overreach and parental rights.

The Arizona DCS Oversight Group, a local advocacy group for parental rights, and State Representative Kelly Townsend (R-Mesa) spoke out in favor of the parents.

Townsend, who helped to draft legislation that requires DCS to obtain a warrant before removing children from their homes, said that DCS and the police distorted the purpose of that legislation, which



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was to minimize the number of children being removed by DCS and to restore due process and protections against illegal search and seizure.

“It was not the intent [of the law] that the level of force after obtaining a warrant was to bring in a SWAT team,” Townsend said. “The imagery is horrifying. What has our country become that we can tear down the doorway of a family who has a child with a high fever that disagrees with their doctor?”

The story became even more convoluted, as it appeared that DCS was making it harder for Bryce and Beck to get their children back because the parents were oppositional to DCS and communicated with media. Furthermore, the children, when originally removed from their home, were placed in separate foster-care homes, something that is atypical of this type of situation. The parents believe that DCS was purposefully making it difficult for their family.

Some also raised concerns that the parents were targeted because their children were unvaccinated.

“It was brought to my attention that these parents may have been targeted by the medical community because they hadn’t vaccinated their children,” Representative Townsend said. “I think if DCS decides to use this as a factor they would be violating a parent’s right to have a personal exemption, a religious exemption and perhaps a medical exemption,” she said.

The doctor claimed that because the toddler was unvaccinated, she was concerned that the child has meningitis, but her assertion had little credibility. According to the [CDC’s vaccination schedule](#), the recommended age for vaccination against meningitis is 11-12 years. A two-year-old generally would not have received that vaccine even if he had pro-vax parents, unless he was in a special situation, such as having an immune deficiency or was traveling to a country where meningitis is prevalent.

Fortunately, Heber did not have meningitis, but had RSV, a common respiratory virus among young children that generally requires rest, fluids, and nasal aspirations at home.

About two months after the children were taken into temporary state custody, they were returned home under the condition that Bryce’s parents acted as “safety monitors” for the children. But on Tuesday, Maricopa County Juvenile Court Judge Timothy Ryan granted the parents custody over the children, meaning Bryce’s parents no longer have to serve as monitors, but the state is still currently retaining decision-making authority.

Amanda Steele, a spokesman for the Maricopa County Attorney’s office, said that they will not be bringing charges against the parents because they are not likely to achieve any convictions.

The police continue to defend their actions, claiming that officers were acting under an order to protect children from abuse and neglect, but critics contend that the raid was “more fitting for drug dealers,” Associated Press reports.

Bryce and Beck are continuing to seek full custody and decision-making authority over their children.

“We didn’t do anything wrong,” Bryce said.

Image: 3TV / CBS 5



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