

Iowa Supreme Court Rules on Child Abuse Registry

Earlier this month, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled on a case regarding a woman being placed on the Central Child Abuse Registry by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The ruling could have severe implications.

DHS placed a woman's name on the child abuse registry for a confirmed allegation of denial of critical care due to lack of proper supervision. She appealed the decision by DHS on grounds that she did not meet the criteria to be placed on the child abuse registry. The Iowa Supreme Court agreed with her argument, stating that DHS had exceeded its authority by placing her on the child abuse registry for only a confirmed allegation of denial of critical care due to lack of proper supervision.

Among many other actions, Iowa law does classify denial of critical care due to lack of proper supervision as child abuse. However, not all actions defined as child abuse meet the criteria for a name being placed on the child abuse registry. Further, recent additions to the child abuse definition do not align directly with the child abuse registry's criteria.

DHS is concerned about the ruling by the Supreme Court and the effects it will have across Iowa. Of the 53,600 individuals on the child abuse registry, 50% of the names are on the list due to denial of critical care.

The Department of Human Services requested and was granted a motion of stay. This will delay the effects of the decision by the Supreme Court. DHS hopes to have the case re-heard by the Court.

The woman's name was kept from public view. The child abuse registry is not open to the public, and individuals are on the registry for ten years.