

## The *Wuoti and Gantt* Case

**Case Name:** Wuoti v. Winters

**Case Status:** Complaint filed June 4, 2024

**Significance:** Whether the government can exclude people of faith from adoption and foster care programs.



**Background:** Pastor Brian and Katy Wuoti and Pastor Bryan and Becca Gantt answered Vermont’s need for caregivers of children in need. The Wuotis started fostering children in 2014. In 2015 and 2019, they adopted two boys, a pair of brothers. In 2021, the couple attempted to renew their Vermont foster care license. As they were seeking to renew their license, the state asked them to rate on a scale of 1-5 how “accepting and supportive” they would be of a child who identified as LGBT. The Wuotis stated that they would love and accept any child into their home, but they could not encourage any ideas or behaviors that were contrary to their faith. Because of their beliefs, the state revoked their license in April 2022. Similarly, the Gantts began providing foster care in 2016. The couple has adopted three children and has a heart for children with fetal alcohol syndrome and those born with drug dependency. The Gantts have an exemplary record, which was evident when Vermont asked the couple to care for another child in 2023. Around the same time, the Gantts learned that the Vermont Department for Children and Families’ new policy now required all parents to be “holistically affirming and supporting” of the department’s gender ideology, even if parents held different beliefs. When the Gantts told the department that they wanted to foster the newborn, they also shared their concerns about the department’s policy on gender ideology. The department went so far as to ask whether the Gantts would use inaccurate pronouns or take a child to events like pride parades due to their faith. As a result of sharing their concerns, the state refused to let them foster the newborn child and revoked their license. Alliance Defending Freedom represents both couples in a lawsuit as they seek to regain their foster care licenses.

### Key Points

- Vermont officials are discriminating against people of faith and putting the state’s ideology and politics above children’s needs.
- Excluding people of faith from foster care hurts children. Vermont desperately needs more loving parents who are willing and able to care for children in need.
- The Wuotis and Gantts will love and accept any child who comes into their homes; they just cannot say or do anything that violates their faith.

### Key Facts

- Vermont has more children in foster care than it has families willing and able to take these children in.
- The Constitution prohibits Vermont from putting these families to the choice of abandoning their religious convictions or forgoing the possibility of helping children in the foster care system.

**The Bottom Line:** Every child deserves a loving home. When the government excludes people of faith from adoption and foster care, children suffer.