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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. Mother Who Sent Boy to Russia Must Pay

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NASHVILLE, Tennessee — The U.S. woman who adopted a boy and later sent him back to Russia on a one-way flight has been ordered to pay $150,000 and produce an additional $1,000 a month in child support.

A judge in Tennessee said Torry Hansen must begin making the child support payments in June and continue to pay until the boy, who is now 9, turns 18. Judge Lee Russell said the $150,000 Hansen must pay includes damages for breach of contract, legal fees and support for the boy.

Hansen sent Artyom Savelyev back to Russia in April 2010 with a letter saying the child was disturbed, violent and she didn't want him anymore. The incident created an international uproar and prompted Russia to temporarily put a moratorium on its adoption program with the United States.

Afterward, the World Association for Children and Parents, the agency that helped Hansen adopt the child, filed a lawsuit seeking child support.

Hansen has since moved to California and has failed to show up at any of the hearings. She has hired three separate Tennessee lawyers to represent her, but the last one has been granted permission to leave the case, said Larry Crain, a lawyer for the adoption agency. She did, however, hire a court reporter to attend the hearing.

Hansen filed a lawsuit last month in a California court against representatives of a Russian orphanage, saying the Russian Supreme Court annulled the adoption. "In doing so, it denied defendants the ability to recover a sum of money in the form of child support from the plaintiff," the suit says.

Hansen wants the California court to recognize the Russian decision. Her California lawyer did not return calls seeking comment. No home listing for Hansen in California could be found.

Adoption advocates hailed the court order as a measure of justice for the boy and said the lawsuit would show that there are consequences to abandoning adopted children.

The motivation behind the lawsuit against Hansen was to deter anyone from doing anything similar and to show the Russians that "you cannot do this in America and get away with it," Crain said.

"The moratorium has since been lifted, but it has certainly caused concern on the part of Russian officials that unless there are consequences when a parent abandons a child placed in their home, there's a need for safeguards to make sure this never occurs," he said.

Judge Lee, in his court order Thursday, said that when Hansen adopted the boy she signed a contract acknowledging that it was possible the child could have physical, emotional or behavioral problems that were unreported and even unknown to the adoption agency.

Lee said $58,000 of the $150,000 would pay for the past two years' worth of support and medical fees for the boy in Russia.

Court documents say the boy was hospitalized for three weeks after he returned to Moscow, but they don't say what he was treated for. He was later moved to an orphanage and then sent to a group home for children.

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