

Russia Is Going Overboard on the Adoption Ban

By [Kelly Fox](#)

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Dear President Putin,

I am neither a politician nor a diplomat. I am simply a mother appealing to you personally to let me bring my baby home.

In July, my husband and I travelled to Volgograd to meet our son, Dylan, whose Russian name is Daniil. He lives in the Volgograd orphanage where he was abandoned at birth. He spent 12 months on a registry hoping to be adopted within Russia, but there was no interest in adopting him. That is when the Education and Science Ministry presented him to us. We fell in love with him right away, and we were overjoyed when the ministry invited us to Russia to meet little Dylan in person. In his two years of life, we were the first visitors he had ever had.

Russian

authorities are
concerned that a
straight couple
will "transfer" a
Russian adopted
child to a gay
couple in Canada,
where same-sex
marriage is legal,
writes Kelly Fox,
a Canadian
parent from a
traditional family
who is being
denied the right
to adopt a
Russian child she
has already met.

Adopting a Russian child is not an easy task. We spent more than a year completing home studies, medical testing, paperwork and interviews before Russia would even consider approving us. But we received the initial approval, and this changed our lives. They say that when you adopt a child, you fall in love the moment you see their photograph. I never believed it until I opened the envelope and saw Dylan's big grey eyes staring up at me from the paper. My husband and I knew we wanted him.

The week before we met Dylan, Russia passed a law banning international adoptions to same-sex couples. As a traditional married couple, however, we didn't think we would fall under the ban.

We returned to Canada to await our final custody hearing in mid-July. Meanwhile, we decorated Dylan's bedroom, visited Russian-speaking schools and prepared his older sister for his arrival.

In October, we attended the final custody hearing in Volgograd. We were hopeful, excited and fully expected to bring little Dylan home. But we believe that the judge received a memo from the Supreme Court instructing all Russian judges not to approve Dylan or any other Russian child for adoption if the parents are citizens of countries like Canada that allow same-sex marriages.

It didn't matter that we were a traditionally married couple. It didn't matter that we shared Russia's values and intended to raise Dylan in a traditional environment. It didn't even matter that Dylan was desperately waiting for us to come.

Apparently, authorities are concerned that Russian children could theoretically be adopted by traditional parents and then somehow be "transferred" to a same-sex couple before they turn 18 in countries that allow same-sex marriages. We feel that this fear has no grounds — and in our case, it is absolutely inconceivable that Dylan could be "transferred" to anyone.

That first day in court, everyone in the courthouse had tears in their eyes as the judge explained that he couldn't approve our case. We returned to court the next day to beg Russia to reconsider. After all, there was no law to support a denial. We met every criteria, and, most important, Russia already let us bond with Dylan. We heard him call us mama and papa. We promised him we would return to bring him home. Instead, we were forced to return home without him.

We chose to adopt from Russia for many reasons. We knew that the orphans of Russia were well looked after. We respected the integrity of the Russian adoption program, and we appreciated its stringency. We liked the fact that our son will retain his Russian citizenship, and we were excited that he comes from a rich culture led by family values and a belief in God. We were proud to adopt both Dylan and his Russian heritage.

That is why Russia's cancelling of adoptions where the parents and children have bonded makes no sense to us. It is inconsistent with the warmth and kindness that Russians have shown us throughout this process. It is cruel to those small Russian children who already love their adoptive parents and are waiting to go home.

President Putin, I will not let this child down. He is still waiting for us at the orphanage, asking with his innocent eyes: "Where is my mama and papa? Why haven't they come?" I couldn't live with myself if I didn't do everything I could to keep my promise to Dylan. We have already travelled to Russia twice, and we will return as many times as it takes to show how much we love and care for this boy.

Since our court hearing in October, we have worked with the Canadian government and gone through all the official channels to bring Dylan home. I understand that Canadian officials flew to Russia to speak with Russian officials on our behalf. They requested inter-government meetings and sent diplomatic notes to the Russian Supreme Court asking them to let us complete the adoption. Every diplomatic effort was met with silence.

I am not familiar with the political issues that divide Russia and Canada. I only know that if Russia honors our adoption, we will make you very proud of the decision. We will raise Dylan in a secure and loving home, complete with a mama, papa and older sister. He will attend a Russian-speaking nursery school to ensure he learns about the beautiful country he comes from. He will be raised in one of the safest cities in Canada, where he will play sports, learn Russian, English and French, and be part of the one of the largest Russian Orthodox Christian communities outside of Russia.

We are not commenting on Russia's stance on same-sex marriage. We respect Russia's right to run its adoption program as it sees fit. We simply believe that allowing Dylan to be adopted into our warm and loving traditional home would be the right and humanitarian thing to do.

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