

Amish couple sue over photo rule Pictures required for immigration violate their beliefs, they say.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

October 29, 2006 Sunday, FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 401 words

Byline: By Joe Mandak The Associated Press

Dateline: PITTSBURGH

Body

An **Amish couple** filed a lawsuit -- something that runs counter to their principles of nonresistance -- to safeguard another cherished **belief**, that having their **photo** taken is against the Bible.

The **couple** are **suing** the federal government because **immigration** officials **require photos**. In the case of the **Amish couple**, the **photos** are **required** so the husband, a Canadian citizen, can become a permanent resident and eventually apply for U.S. citizenship.

The Old Order **Amish** shun modern conveniences such as automobiles and electricity and believe that having one's **picture** taken **violates** the biblical injunction against making "graven images."

The **couple's** attorney, Michael Sampson, who is taking the case without charge, **said** they could be excommunicated if the **Amish** community learned of the lawsuit, so he asked a federal judge to let them proceed anonymously. The judge has not **ruled** on the request.

The U.S. government sometimes allowed immigrants to waive the **photo** requirements for religious reasons. Because of more recent anti-terrorism efforts, there are no longer any exceptions based on religion.

But Sampson **said immigration** authorities still allowed some elderly or infirm people to avoid being photographed, and thinks an exemption should be made in this case, too.

The husband, 31, and wife, 24, were married in June 2001 in Pennsylvania while the man was in the country as a visitor. They have since had two children.

They have provided fingerprints, birth certificates and other documents needed for **immigration**, but they still must submit two photographs.

For now, the husband is entitled to stay here while the government attempts to resolve the matter, Sampson **said**. But they live in fear of a deportation order.

"The reality is, we've exhausted every possible step we can take to protect them," Sampson **said**. "If my clients don't file this lawsuit, they're at risk of having this young family torn apart, separated by the Canadian-U.S. border."

U.S. Attorney Mary Beth Buchanan, who will represent the government, declined to comment on the case Friday.

In another case filed two years ago, Buchanan defended the **photo** requirement by **saying** that Homeland Security officials could not do a thorough background check on an immigrant without a **photo**.

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"They can't go out and show people a fingerprint and say, 'Do you recognize this fingerprint? What can you tell me about this person?'" Buchanan said.

Notes

Nation

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: **IMMIGRATION** (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (90%); JUDGES (90%); SUITS & CLAIMS (90%); RELIGION (90%); LITIGATION (90%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); WEDDINGS & ENGAGEMENTS (78%); NATURALIZATION (78%); DEPORTATION (72%); CHILDREN (69%); NATIONAL SECURITY (67%); TERRORISM (67%); BACKGROUND CHECKS (60%)

Geographic: PENNSYLVANIA, USA (79%); CANADA (92%); UNITED STATES (92%); NORTH AMERICA (79%)

Load-Date: October 29, 2006

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