

# **Homeschoolers Interrogated On Guns, Vaccines**

## *Caseworker demands: 'Follow public school' curriculum*

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by Leo Hohmann

It all started with an unwanted knock on the door by a government worker and it's being answered with a \$60 million lawsuit.

A New Jersey family is suing the state child-protection agency after it allegedly sent a caseworker to their home to interrogate them on everything from their son's homeschool education to questions about vaccines and guns in the house.

Christopher Zimmer and his wife Nicole of Belvidere [filed a civil rights complaint](#) in April in U.S. District Court in Trenton alleging "unlawful and unconstitutional home intrusion." "I won't forget that morning for a long, long time," said Christopher Zimmer, thinking back to Tuesday, Jan. 13, which began with a caseworker knocking on his front door.

He said Michelle Marchese, a caseworker for the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency, demanded she be let inside the house, "Now!" according to court documents. Startled by the aggressive confrontation, Christopher Zimmer asked the purpose of her visit.

Marchese refused to answer the question, saying only that 15-year-old Christopher Zimmer Jr. was not getting a "proper education" and she was at the Zimmer home under the authority of DCP&P to make sure they were homeschooling their son "correctly," the suit states.

Not knowing the extent of his rights, Christopher Zimmer phoned local police. The police arrived on the scene but allowed Marchese to enter the home and continue to issue threats to the family and inspect the house, all without a warrant, the lawsuit states.

The Zimmers let the woman inside, attempting to prove they had nothing to hide, but after two hours of what the family described as intense interrogation, it became clear this issue would not be quickly resolved. "My fear was, if I didn't let her in the house, if I had closed the door and didn't let her in the house then the police would be knocking at the door and think I'm hiding something," Christopher Zimmer Sr. [told the Warren Reporter](#).

The questions started out simple, about home life and happiness, but Zimmer said the questions quickly turned pointed and intrusive. Marchese demanded to see records on textbooks used, attendance and test scores, the lawsuit states, when in fact New Jersey law doesn't require homeschool parents to maintain and turn in such records to the state.

Marchese then allegedly told the Zimmers that their homeschooling materials "had to include what the public school system would have taught him, and that they had to both work with the public school and follow the public school curriculum," according to the lawsuit.

In fact there is no such requirement for homeschooling curricula to line up with what's taught in the public schools, according to state regulations [published on the New Jersey Department of Education website](#).

"The law does not require or authorize the local board of education to ...

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