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## German Court Victory Sets Precedent for International Fathers' Rights

CHICAGO, August 9 - - The Fatherhood Educational Institute (FEI) President Emeritus and leading family law attorney Jeffery M. Leving supports the recent ruling by the German Constitutional Court that has promised to strengthen the custody rights of unmarried fathers. The German Constitutional Court ruled that existing provisions violate the basic rights of unmarried fathers. This new ruling brings Germany in congruence with the European Court of Human Rights. Soon unmarried fathers could automatically have equal rights to parent their children.

The Constitutional Court justices admitted that Germany's current law "disproportionally put parental rights of a father below those of the mother, even if this is not in the interest of the child."

This was also the law in Illinois prior to 1986, before Attorney Jeffery M. Leving battled to change it by successfully co-authoring the new Illinois Joint Custody Law.

It's not just an American phenomenon: Around the globe, the numbers of single-parent homes are on the rise. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that there were an astounding 12.9 million single parent families in 2006- 10.4 million single mother families and 2.5 single father families. There are numerous, well-documented studies which indicate that traditional family structures are changing on a global level.

As a recognized champion in the area of equal parental rights, Leving states: "I am elated that our European counterparts are being progressive towards recognizing the legal rights of unmarried fathers. Single fathers face unique challenges when they separate and they often feel cheated by the judicial system when it comes to their children, but thankfully this is changing in Europe."

"We need modern custody laws that reflect the reality of society and that bring parental rights in balance for unmarried fathers. Children need both a mother and father," says Psychotherapist Dr. Karl Schmitt.

As President Emeritus of FEI, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting positive father involvement, Leving (<http://dadsrights.com>) and his colleagues have spearheaded successful social and legislative reform in the United States so fathers can remain involved in the lives of their children.

This new ruling in Europe is a victory for unmarried fathers everywhere. Unmarried fathers are parents too.

For more information about the Fatherhood Educational Institute, visit: [www.fatherhood-edu.org](http://www.fatherhood-edu.org) or call 312-795-9060.

### *About Jeffery M. Leving*

*Known for advocating strong family bonds, Chicago divorce attorney Jeffery Leving and his firm have reunited fathers and children since 1981. He helped reunite Elian Gonzalez with his father in Cuba, winning international support. On August 5, 2009, Leving was selected as an expert resource for the first White House Roundtable & Town Hall Meeting on Responsible Fatherhood. Leving is the founder of [dadsrights.com](http://dadsrights.com).*