

My name is Mike Earnest. I am Molly Corbett's uncle and Jack and Sarah's great uncle. Jack and Sarah and their mother have endured unbearable pain after a tragedy. Despite their suffering, Molly and her kids were attempting to move forward with their lives. Jack and Sarah we're excited to start school on Tuesday. They had just returned from a shopping trip Monday afternoon picking out their school supplies only to be ripped away with zero notification, from their mother and the stable, loving environment that had twice previously been evaluated as safe on all counts. As the children screamed and begged, "please let me stay with my mommy," my niece, their mother, was forced to relinquish her children. A neighbor, an EMT and firefighter watching from next-door said that this was the most horrible thing that he had ever seen. It was utterly devastating. The next day Molly and her family were given an hour of supervised visitation in a courthouse with her children. Following this "visitation", a surprise ruling was made granting permanent guardianship to the children's Irish relatives. While the children were born in Ireland they moved to North Carolina over four years ago and established a permanent home and life here. In fact, over a year ago their father had finalized their status as permanent US residents – the first step to US citizenship. And, as recent as three weeks ago while visiting my wife and I in Northern Virginia, the children's father indicated to my wife his desire for both himself and their children to become US citizens. These are two children who have truly embraced the American culture. Jack is a baseball player and fan while Sarah will tell you she is Taylor Swift's biggest little fan. The expeditious nature of these rulings have confounded us considering the complexity of this matter. It appears we have one last hope with this custodial hearing tomorrow. Perhaps the most confounding matter is that these two children ages 8 and 10, who could clearly articulate their own desires, have not yet been allowed to speak on their own behalf. We strongly believe these children should be heard. We are encouraged by the many words of comfort and hope and the prayers of thousands that the children be returned to their mother.