

# US grants Charlie Gard permanent residency

Frances Gibb Legal Editor

The terminally ill baby Charlie Gard has been granted permanent resident status in the US along with his parents so that he can be treated there.

Unless the British courts decide to lift the order barring the removal of the 11-month-old baby to the US for the treatment that his parents want him to receive, however, the resident status will have no effect.

The decision by Congress to pass the amendment came as it emerged that the parents of the baby had lost their latest fight over his care. Chris Gard and Connie Yates and doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London had been in disagreement over a brain scan carried out on the baby before a gathering of specialists this week.

The couple said that an electroencephalogram should be carried out for no longer than 30 minutes. However, specialists at the hospital, where Charlie is being cared for, said a scan would have to be carried out for at least four hours to generate useful data.

Mr Justice Francis ruled in favour of the doctors, saying the scan should "be of such duration" as treating clinicians "may advise". He considered compet-

ing written arguments on Saturday, before the meeting of clinical experts.

No details have emerged of that meeting, attended by the American specialist Michio Hirano, who had argued that experimental treatment in New York had the prospect of a 10 per cent improvement in Charlie's condition. However, it is believed that the position of the medical team treating Charlie, who suffers from a rare genetic condition and has brain damage, remains unchanged.

They argue that the therapy is experimental and will not help. They believe that in the best interests of the baby — who they say cannot breathe unaided, see, hear, move or cry — life support treatment should stop.

Charlie's parents, who are in their 30s and come from Bedfont, west London, argue that the therapy treatment has shown improved prospects in recent months and should be tried.

In April the judge ruled in favour of Great Ormond Street and said that Charlie should be allowed to die with dignity. Last week he considered the couple's latest claims at preliminary hearings in the Family Division of the High Court in London, to be continued this Friday and next week.

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