



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY COMMISSION
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Nadler
Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
2132 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
2056 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graham and Nadler, and Ranking Members Feinstein and Jordan:

We are a diverse group of leaders representing a broad range of institutions that serve communities around the country and around the world. We are writing to bring your attention to a common-sense bill that ensures adopted individuals are treated as equal to biological individuals under U.S. law.

Prior to the *Child Citizenship Act of 2000*, the administrative steps required of families adopting internationally were unnecessarily burdensome. The process included applying for and moving through a lengthy naturalization process for their children, in addition to the lengthy and costly adoption process. The *Child Citizenship Act of 2000* granted automatic citizenship to all foreign-born children brought to the United States, who had at least one parent who was a U.S. Citizen. Unfortunately, that Act only applied to adoptees under the age of 18 when the bill was enacted, leaving an entire population of adopted children without full U.S. citizenship.

The *Adoptee Citizenship Act* closes the loophole to provide immediate citizenship to these individuals already adopted by U.S. citizens, yet left out of the previous bill. This bill solves the innumerable problems these adopted Americans have had to endure because of their lack of legal immigration

status. This has included challenges in attending college, accessing banking services, or starting their careers

This bipartisan bill ensures that individuals, who were adopted by a U.S. citizen before they reached 18 years of age receive citizenship. Adopting from other countries is a privilege. Not every nation chooses to participate in intercountry adoption, and the United States should respect the countries that do choose to participate, by quickly securing permanent citizenship for the thousands of adoptees who do not currently have citizenship.

We strongly urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Adoptee Citizenship Act to provide a permanent legal remedy for the thousands of sons and daughters of U.S. citizens who were left behind and not granted American citizenship.

We thank you for your commitment to adoptees, and we look forward to working with you on this important bill.

Respectfully,

Russell Moore
President
Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty
Commission

Joy Alessi
Director
Adoptee Rights Campaign

Scott Arbeiter
President
World Relief

Kurt Capelli
Co-Founder
Family Coalition for Adoptee Citizenship

Susan Cox
Vice President
Holt International

Paul Cunningham
National President
Korean War Veterans Association, Inc.

James R. Fisher
Executive Director
Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation

Kristie De Peña
VP of Policy, Dir. of Immigration
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Shirley V. Hoogstra
President
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

Hyepin Im
President & CEO
Faith and Community Empowerment

Laura Jeon
President
Korean American Federation of Los Angeles

Chuck Johnson
President and CEO
National Council for Adoption

Dongchan Kim
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Tammy Kim
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President
Korean Society of Dallas