



March 21, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Republican Leader McConnell:

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

Adopting from other countries is a privilege. Not every nation chooses to participate in intercountry adoption, and the United States ought to respect the countries that do choose to participate, by quickly securing permanent citizenship for the thousands of adoptees who do not currently have citizenship. Once an adoption is finalized, an adoptee should be treated the same as a biological child. These adoptees were brought here lawfully and legally and deserve the full protection of U.S. law.

For the first time, this important piece of legislation was passed by the Houses of Representatives as an amendment to the COMPETES Act.

Now, as leaders in both chambers work to reconcile the COMPETES Act and the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021, it is essential that this bipartisan bill be included in the final package. We strongly urge Congress to finally 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,

Brent Leatherwood
Acting President
Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious
Liberty Commission

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Director of Policy
Adoptee Rights Campaign

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Korean War Veterans Association

Kristie De Peña
Vice President of Policy, Director of
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American Families United



James R. Fisher
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World Relief

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National Council for Adoption

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THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY COMMISSION
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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