



AAAA Hails Passage of Accuracy for Adoptees Act

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The American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (“AAAA”) proudly announces that the President has signed into law S.1614, the Accuracy for Adoptees Act. This bill, proposed and shepherded by AAAA and passed by the U.S. Congress last month, helps adoptive children who had been given inaccurate birthdates abroad. This is a common problem when children are abandoned at orphanages without any birth record. When U.S. adoptions are processed, the foreign country assigns a “best guess” birth date that is then used in processing adoption and immigration paperwork. These birth dates can sometimes be vastly inaccurate. While there is an existing state court process in the U.S. where these families can present medical, educational, and dental evidence to support a request for an amended date of birth that is appropriate for the child’s true age, U.S. agencies will not accept these amended dates. As a result these children end up with two different dates of birth – one on their federal documents (e.g. passport, social security card) and the new date on their state documents (e.g. birth certificate, driver’s license). This creates a multitude of problems as these children age, from improper school placement, inability to get a passport, and even accusations of identity fraud when two different dates of birth exist for one child.

The Accuracy for Adoptees Act solves these problems by requiring federal agencies to recognize amended birth dates as issued by state courts. This bill removes the bureaucracy, red tape, and endless dead ends that these families currently face.

Karen S. Law, adoption attorney in Ashburn, VA and Co-Chair of AAAA’s international adoption subcommittee, writes, “I started noticing what an unimaginable hardship this was causing for children and families – and the more I talked with my colleagues, the more I became aware of its breadth. Many of these children had suffered horrific loss and pain, and then arrive in the U.S. to become victims of a bureaucratic process with no right answer. I am so proud to have been able to contribute to this legislation which will finally give these children and their families some peace of mind.”

The bill was proposed by AAAA members who had faced this issue and its long term consequences time and time again. In an effort to protect these children, AAAA partnered with adoption champions, Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Blunt (R-MO) and Representatives Lamar Smith (R-TX) and Karen Bass (D-CA), who introduced the bill in the Senate and House respectively. Only 72 bills have been signed into law by the President this Congress and the Accuracy for Adoptees Act is one of them. Of these 72, 11 extend or reauthorize existing laws and 7 rename federal facilities.

Donald Cofsky, President of AAAA, writes, “I am extremely pleased and proud that the U.S. House and Senate passed and the President signed this commonsense legislation – placing adoptive families and children ahead of partisan politics. We owe immense thanks to all of the bill’s cosponsors for their dedication to adoptive families and for their tireless efforts in ushering this bill through the House and Senate. I cannot overstate the importance of this legislation and the positive impact that it will have on adopted children and their families.”

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