



National Council For Adoption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council on Accreditation Announces Intent to Terminate Their Role as a National Accrediting Entity

October 6, 2017 – Alexandria, VA – The Council on Accreditation (COA) announced today that the organization has notified the U.S. Department of State of their intent to terminate their role as a national accrediting entity—a role that COA has performed since the United States implemented the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption in 2008. COA intends to provide accreditation services during a 14 month transitional period, during which time they will continue to meet with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Children’s Issues (OCI) to work toward a resolution.

This news comes after tumultuous weeks of the Office of Children’s Issues requiring new and burdensome reporting requirements on adoption service providers, and a re-interpretation of the existing regulations that have been in effect for the accreditation of U.S. adoption service providers for almost 10 years. This is the latest in a long series of intercountry adoption policy changes instated by OCI as the Central Adoption Authority, which have resulted in an 80% decline in the number of intercountry adoptions to the United States since 2004.

According to NCFA president and CEO Chuck Johnson, “Every year, Department of State promises stronger leadership and new and better policies that will allow the U.S. to offer the hope and promise of a nurturing, permanent family to a child that is in desperate need, yet every year we see their actions resulting in additional limits on our ability to serve this vulnerable population of children. COA’s departure as a national accrediting entity will cause chaos to the field of accredited agencies and further limit their ability to provide international services.”

NCFA calls upon the leadership of the U.S. Department of State, including Secretary Rex Tillerson, Assistant Secretary Carl Risch, and Special Advisor on Children’s Issues Suzanne Lawrence, to conduct an internal review to assess whether or not OCI’s policies are fulfilling the original intent and promise of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. According to former Senator Mary Landrieu, the original co-sponsor of the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) which laid the foundation for the United States to implement the Hague Convention, “Had I known that the Department of State would implement legislation that Congress intended to help create opportunity for children living in orphanages around the world without hope of

ever having a family in this way, I never would have supported it. Department of State's bungling application of the IAA is vastly different than the original intent of the legislation."

In the intermediate, NCFA calls upon the leadership at OCI to resolve their conflict with the Council on Accreditation and ensure that orphaned children are not adversely impacted by lack of an experienced accrediting entity to evaluate U.S. adoption agencies. For more than 40 years, COA has been the leading accreditor of agencies providing child welfare services, and they are responsible for several tasks that are vital to the United States' participation in intercountry adoption, including determining whether agencies are eligible for accreditation, monitoring the performance of accredited agencies, and investigating and disciplining misconduct.

Ultimately, the goal of National Council For Adoption, intercountry adoption service providers, and our federal government is the same: to create opportunities for the world's children to thrive, while ensuring that America's involvement in intercountry affairs is ethical, transparent, and well-informed. NCFA encourages intercountry adoption professionals to raise their voice to the policymakers in Congress and decision-makers in the U.S. Department of State, letting them know the impact the Office of Children's Issues is having on their work.

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ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFA's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFA serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption.

For more information, visit www.AdoptionCouncil.org.