



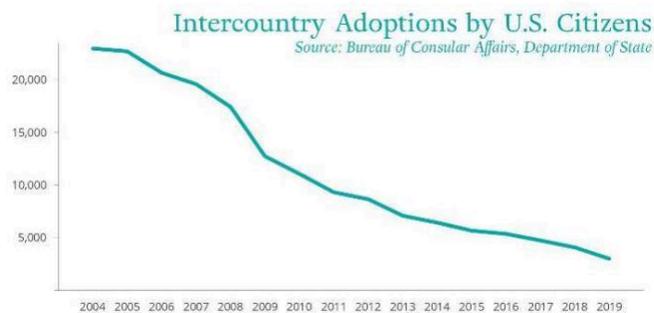
Media Contact:
Chuck Johnson
(703) 299-6633
cjohnson@adoptioncouncil.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New State Department Report on Intercountry Adoption Points to Increasing Numbers of Children Left Behind

May 8, 2020 – Alexandria, VA – This week, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) released its FY 2019 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoptions.

The report shows that American families adopted only 2,971 children through intercountry adoption between October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. This is a decline of 26% from the previous year, and an 87% decline since 2004. **The number of children finding permanent families through intercountry adoptions to the U.S. is now at the lowest point in 50 years.**



“The decline in intercountry adoptions should come as no surprise to those of us who follow international adoption,” said Chuck Johnson, President of National Council For Adoption (NCFA). “When the number of children without a process or path to a permanent family remains in the tens of millions, and intercountry adoption continues to decrease, it is clear that policies are not working in children’s best interests,” Johnson said. “The U.S. must re-prioritize intercountry adoption as a viable option for orphaned, abandoned, and relinquished children, and we call upon the White House, Congress, and the Department of State to engage with us to find solutions.”

The FYI 2019 report is the first to show the impact of two of the State Department’s most recent controversial decisions on Intercountry Adoption – the new accrediting entity’s increase in fees to families and agencies, and the Department of State’s ban on “Soft Referrals,” a regulatory policy implemented by DOS in February 2018 which has made it more difficult for U.S. adoption service providers to advocate effectively for waiting children with special needs.¹

¹ <https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-soft-referral-ban-for-international-adoptions-hurts-special-needs-children>

Increasing costs for international adoption continue to be an obstacle for many American families who want to grow their families through intercountry adoption and provide a permanent, loving home for waiting children. However, the biggest obstacle remains the bureaucratic policies that unnecessarily complicate adoption processes and hinder accredited agencies and other countries' child welfare authorities from partnering with the United States to successfully find permanent families for children.

Government overreach, overly burdensome regulations, and bureaucratic red tape result in skyrocketing costs that only perpetuate the problems, and fail to bring about substantive reforms that protect the best interests of children and parents. The U.S. government's lack of collaboration with other nations and with adoption professionals exacerbates the problem.

"We've been sounding the alarm on this for years and too often it's gone unheeded," said Ryan Hanlon, Vice President at NCFA. "In light of yet another year of tragic decline, NCFA believes we cannot wait any longer for swift action to halt this decline and implement solutions that work to safely and ethically bring more waiting children into permanent, nurturing, prepared families as soon as possible. For many years now, we have provided specific, practical policy suggestions to the Department of State that would improve this process for all involved. It is time – past time – for the Department of State to implement these much-needed changes."

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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.