



National Council For Adoption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Accrediting Entity Fees Make Intercountry Adoption Prohibitively Expensive

February 6, 2018 – Alexandria, VA – On Thursday, February 1, 2018, the U.S. Department of State published a notice to adoption service providers regarding substantial fee increases associated with obtaining and maintaining accreditation by the federal government, which is required to provide intercountry adoption services. This notice informed agencies and prospective adoptive parents of triple-digit percentage increases in accreditation fees, much of it shouldered by American families who want to adopt children.

This substantial fee increase is what the previous accrediting entity, Council on Accreditation, warned the agencies they accredit about in October 2017, when they informed agencies of the Department of State's new anti-adoption policies that would substantially increase accreditation costs.

"The real tragedy here is that this will undoubtedly lead toward fewer children finding permanent families," stated National Council For Adoption (NCFA's) president and CEO, Chuck Johnson. "The Department of State's Adoption Division has refused all efforts to work collaboratively with intercountry adoption advocates to create an intercountry adoption process that is ethical, transparent, and attainable. Their destructive policies will result in many prospective adoptive families unable to afford intercountry adoption and in many adoption service providers being unable to continue their child welfare services due to the burdensome costs of maintaining accreditation."

The Department of State announced that the new accrediting entity will begin collecting these non-refundable fees from agencies in a matter of weeks, prior to providing these agencies or adoptive families any services. Yesterday, with less than two weeks before fees are due to the new accrediting entity, the Department of State refused to comment on whether agencies would be able to review the contracts they are required to sign – or even if they'll receive those contracts prior to paying the new fees. By the new accrediting entity's own account, the first round of fees – all paid by prospective adoptive families – will amount to \$2.1 million in new non-refundable fees annually.

NCFA calls upon Congressional lawmakers to exercise their role in oversight of the Department of State's actions to ensure that the State Department is operating within the original intent given to them by Congress when Department of State was designated by Congress as the United States' Central Adoption Authority. In addition, NCFA calls upon the Small Business Administration to advocate on behalf of the small business non-profit adoption agencies who will be unable to continue serving U.S. families and orphaned children around the world without a reversal of these dangerous and draconian fee increases.

According to Johnson, “Under the Department of State’s failed leadership, the number of intercountry adoptions has declined annually, even with a tragically large worldwide population of orphans in dire need of families.” The opportunity for the U.S. to serve this very vulnerable population of children by offering them the hope of a loving family through adoption is increasingly rare. These new policies being implemented by the State Department will further reduce the viable option of adoption as families are financially unable to afford the growing costs of adopting internationally and non-profit adoption agencies that serve them close their doors. Johnson concludes, “Vulnerable children and the loving American families that want to adopt them are counting on us to prevent this from happening.”

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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.