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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Noem:

This letter is regarding the recently expanded pause on issuing immigrant visas for 75 countries, which has rolled back exemptions for adoption visas (IR-3, IR-4, IH-3, IH-4). I strongly encourage you to reverse this rollback.

As you know, international adoption visas are only issued to a select group of children who have gone through multiyear processes with their prospective U.S. families before they can be adopted. In 2023, only 1,275 international adoption visas were issued by the Department of State (State).¹ Every international adoptee is subject to extensive vetting through both the foreign adoption process and U.S. immigration procedures. Pausing these visas prevents children who have already been legally adopted by U.S. families from coming home. These children are not national security threats.

Vulnerable children around the world still need safe, loving, and permanent families. Adoption establishes a permanent parent-child relationship and is not simply a pathway to immigration. International adoption visas have traditionally been exempted from immigrant visa pauses. They were exempted from the current pause that was issued in July 2025 and from President Trump's similar pause in 2020.

Constituents in my district are devastated. They have invested years in the international adoption process to grow their families and are now at a loss for how to proceed. They deserve answers to how the adoption process has changed for them and what timelines to expect moving forward. This is more than a legal process - it's a decision to show love, compassion, and care to a child and to embrace them as part of one's own family.

¹ "Adoption Statistics Dashboard." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/adopt_ref/adoption-statistics-esri.html?wcmmode=disabled. Accessed 28 Jan. 2026.

Every single day matters for a child living in an orphanage waiting to be united with their family. You have said that you will consider all adoption visa cases on a case by case basis for an exception under the National Interest Exception; this will create further delays in the adoption process. These unnecessary delays cause tangible harm, and this discriminatory policy will not protect children. It will keep them institutionalized and separated from families who are ready and legally approved to care for them.

In light of this recently expanded pause, I request a response to the following questions by February 13, 2026:

- What is the legal authority for rescinding the adoption visa exemption that President Trump explicitly included in the July 2025 immigrant visa pause?
- What concrete timeline does the Administration have to reunite families who have already completed legal adoptions and whose children are now stranded abroad? Will their cases be granted expedited review for the National Interest Exception?
- How does State justify applying a public charge rationale to international adoptions where adoptive parents are U.S. citizens who have already demonstrated financial capacity through the adoption process?
- How much additional time will case by case consideration for the National Interest Exception add to the international adoption timeline?
- Will State commit to informing families at all stages of the international adoption process of these changes to visa processing and provide them with updated timelines?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress