

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 832

By Haile

A RESOLUTION to urge the President of the United States and the United States Congress to enact legislation securing the citizenship of internationally adopted adult individuals.

WHEREAS, since the close of World War II, over 500,000 children have been adopted from abroad by U.S. citizen parents; and

WHEREAS, the Child Citizenship Act of 2000 aimed to provide equal treatment under United States law for adopted and biological children by granting citizenship to internationally born adoptees. However, when the act became law, it did not apply to internationally born adoptees who were already over the age of eighteen; and

WHEREAS, as a result, an alarming number of adoptees who were born before February 27, 1982, and raised in the United States and/or did not enter the country on an "orphan visa" do not have U.S. citizenship and therefore are potentially subject to deportation. These adoptees' parents did not complete necessary processes to provide their adopted children with citizenship or, in many cases, even a green card; and

WHEREAS, several deportations of individuals who were legally adopted from foreign countries have already taken place, breaking up families and returning the deported individuals to places where they do not know the language or culture or have any known family members; and

WHEREAS, adoptees who do not have citizenship have come from countries including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, Ukraine, and Vietnam. There are an estimated 18,000 Korean American adoptees alone who do not have American citizenship, despite having been legally adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2019 (S. 1554 and H.R. 2731), which will grant citizenship to all adult adoptees, was introduced with bipartisan support in the 116th Congress; and

WHEREAS, both bills seek to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to grant automatic citizenship to all qualifying children adopted by a U.S. citizen parent, regardless of the date on which the adoption was finalized or the entering visa. Citizenship would be granted to any individual who was adopted by a U.S. citizen before age eighteen, was physically present in the United States in the citizen parent's legal custody pursuant to a lawful admission before the individual reached age eighteen, never previously acquired U.S. citizenship, and was lawfully residing in the United States. The bills also would give adult adoptees who had already been deported the opportunity to return to the United States; and

WHEREAS, resolutions in support of adoptee citizenship have already been passed in the states of California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, and Nevada and in major cities such as Seattle, Los Angeles, Houston, and Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly support as a civil right, automatic citizenship to all children adopted by a U.S. citizen parent. Children adopted by U.S. citizen parents should have the same rights as children of U.S. citizens. Legislation should be adopted that will provide citizenship for all adult adoptees whose adoptive parents did not complete the naturalization process while they were children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby urge the President of the United States and the United States Congress to enact legislation securing the citizenship of internationally adopted adult individuals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the President of the United States and every member of the Tennessee delegation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.