

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Rubio,

On January 14, 2026, the Department of State announced that, effective January 21, 2026, the Department would be “pausing all visa issuances” for applications from 75 different countries. In the announcement, the Department stated, without evidence, that immigrants are a financial burden on Americans.¹

Following this abrupt policy change, we have heard grave concerns from constituents in the final stages of international adoptions that have been years in the making. These families have completed all required U.S. immigration, financial, and child-welfare vetting and have waited years for the opportunity to bring their children home. However, adoption visa protocols require immigrant visas, which are now on pause. As a result of this decision, these families’ plans to bring their children to the United States are facing uncertainty.

Public reports indicate that the State Department’s blanket refusal to issue visas for these children has already disrupted or halted international adoptions for approximately 300 U.S. families. The result is that children who are already legally part of U.S. families are forced to remain separated from their parents and siblings, often residing in orphanages or foster care placements abroad, with no clear timeline for reunification. This outcome is unprecedented and horrifying, particularly given that international adoption visas have historically been exempt from prior travel restrictions, national security suspensions, and processing pauses.

While the Department has stated that the rationale for pausing immigrant visa issuance is concern over public charge and financial burden, the application of this policy to adoption cases falls far outside of any asserted scope of the policy’s intent. Extensive screenings by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the State Department Consulates already ensure that adoptive families have demonstrated the ability to bear full financial responsibility for their children.

While we have heard through correspondence with the Department that Americans going through the adoption process can qualify for an exception under the National Interest Exception, we strongly urge you to immediately officially establish categorical exemptions for adoption-related visas, consistent with long-standing U.S. practice, and transmit this information to the public, so these American families can unite with their children.

¹*Immigrant Visa Processing Updates for Nationalities at High Risk of Public Benefits Usage*, U.S. Department of State (January 14, 2026) (online at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/immigrant-visa-processing-updates-for-nationalities-at-high-risk-of-public-benefits-usage.html>).

Thank you for your attention to this critical and time-sensitive matter.

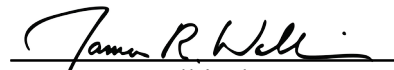
Sincerely,



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



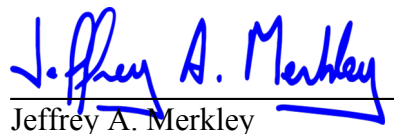
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



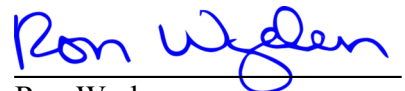
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



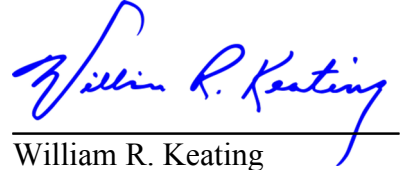
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



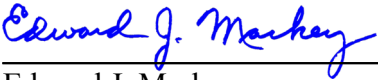
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



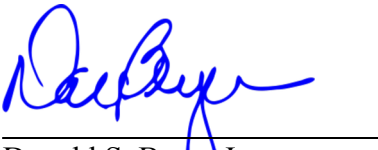
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



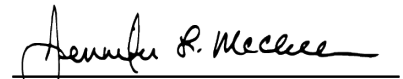
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress