

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

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<sup>1</sup>*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.

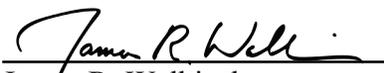
Sincerely,



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

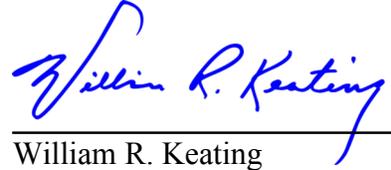


Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



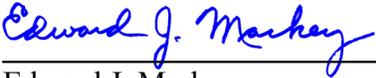
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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



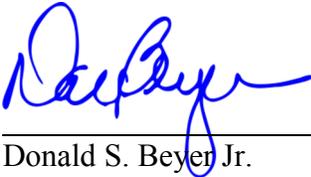
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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



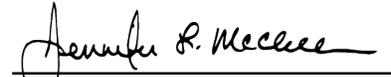
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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



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SETH MOULTON  
Member of Congress