



Protect Adoptees and American Families Act

Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) along with Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), introduced the bipartisan Protect Adoptees and American Families Act ([S. 2923](#)) on September 18, 2025. The same day, Reps. Adam Smith (D-Washington) and Don Bacon (R-Nebraska) introduced an identical, bipartisan companion legislation in the House ([H.R. 5492](#)). The text of the bill, in both chambers, is identical to the [Adoptee Citizenship Act](#), which was last introduced in the 118th Congress

The Protect Adoptees and American Families Act would provide U.S. citizenship to individuals born outside of the United States who were adopted as children by American parents. This bipartisan and bicameral bill would fix a loophole that denies some adoptees the right to citizenship. The [Child Citizenship Act \(CCA\) of 2000](#) guaranteed automatic citizenship to qualifying adoptees born outside of the U.S. under the age of 18. However, the CCA did not apply to adoptees who were over the age of 18 years when the law went into effect on February 27, 2001. As a result, an estimated 35,000 adult adoptees failed to receive U.S. citizenship when the CCA went into effect, even though they had been legally adopted by U.S. citizens. Many of these adoptees continue to reside in the U.S., but are susceptible to deportation, unable to travel outside of the U.S. and unable to work legally.

What the Protect Adoptees and American Families Act Does

- The bill would grant an adoptee born outside of the U.S. who was adopted by a U.S. citizen parent automatic U.S. citizenship if he or she meets the following conditions:
 - Adopted by a U.S. citizen parent before reaching the age of 18;
 - Physically present in the U.S. and in the legal custody of a U.S. citizen parent (pursuant to a lawful admission) before reaching the age of 18;
 - Never acquired U.S. citizenship before the enactment of this bill; and
 - Resides in the U.S. on the date of the enactment of this bill.
- The bill would also allow certain adopted individuals residing outside of the U.S. to automatically become a U.S. citizen once he or she is physically present in the U.S. (pursuant to a lawful admission), if they meet the following conditions:
 - Meet points 1, 2 and 3 described above; and
 - Undergo and pass criminal background checks that show they do not have any unresolved criminal activity.

Who May Benefit from the Protect Adoptees and American Families Act?

The Forum's 2019 [Adoptee Citizenship Act bill summary](#) contains examples of individuals who stood to benefit from the Adoptee Citizenship Act and would similarly today benefit from the newly-introduced Protect Adoptees and American Families Act.