



Meeting with US Dept of State Intercountry Adoption

13 July 2017

Attendees

Trish Maskew : US Dept of State (DOS)

Christine Harold : US Dept of State

Katie Epp : US Dept of State

Stephanie Eye : US Dept of State

Lynelle Long : InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV)

Joy Alessi : Adoptee Rights Campaign (ARC) / Member of ICAV

Sara : ARC / Member of ICAV

Maline Carroll : ARC / Member of ICAV

Becky Belcore : National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) / Member of ICAV

Summary of Meeting

ICAV met with DOS on 13 July @ 8am EST via teleconference to specifically discuss Citizenship issues facing intercountry adoptees, adopted to the USA prior to 1983.

Prior to the teleconference, ICAV provided our latest [Citizenship - ICAV Perspective Paper](#) to DOS along with a meeting Agenda that outlined our concerns, questions and suggestions.

DOS main messages in response were:

- DOS are the Central Authority for Intercountry Adoption in the USA.
- The USA signed The 1993 Hague Convention for ICA in 1993 but it didn't take effect until 2008.
- DOS role & responsibility is Co-ordination, Communication and overall ownership of the Process of intercountry adoption until an adoption is finalised (see website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/about-us/our-role.html>).

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- DOS have very limited authority with respect to post-adoption issues. They are interested in hearing about many post-adoption matters, such as allegations of abuse in the country of origin, post-adoption reporting, dissolution, unregulated custody transfer, fraud, corruption, any matter that could present risk of harm to children or result in a bilateral concern, or compromise an adoption program in a specific country, and in the perspectives of adoptees, including adult adoptees.
 - The Citizenship issues are complex and requires the Dept of Homeland Security's US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) jurisdiction so DOS has a limited capacity to assist but is willing to facilitate communications and help adoptees navigate the process, where possible.
 - DOS has actively supported the fight for Citizenship for ALL adoptees for years, including recently speaking out in support of legislation that needs to pass via Congress
 - **DOS is happy to receive Citizenship queries** (and any other intercountry adoption related questions) **from adult intercountry adoptees and best to write to DOS at adoption@state.gov**. DOS can answer some questions about Citizenship but others that are more complex may need referral to USCIS who has jurisdiction over immigration matters. DOS may not be able to answer everything but is happy to facilitate communication with USCIS.
 - DOS to date, has not heard from many adult intercountry adoptees - estimated 10 prior to Trump Administration
 - DOS welcomes any feedback from adult intercountry adoptees on suggestions for resources/ topics on their website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/information-for-you/adoptees.html>

Outcomes of Meeting

Data

DOS advise the estimated 35,000 affected adoptees lacking citizenship statistic is difficult to work with and suggests a breakdown to derive the scenario situations which will be more useful to present to USCIS to request and derive better processes.

ICAV agreed to encourage intercountry adoptee organisations to gather a list of "scenarios" of how adoptees entered the USA i.e., what types of Visa's they entered on e.g., Adoption Visa; Visiting Visa, Immigrant Visa, etc. with numbers impacted in each scenario. Other useful information could include the Country of Origin, the year and State of arrival into the USA, the year adoption paperwork was completed and by whom (agency, lawyer).

Communicating & Improving Processes

DOS has agreed to provide equivalent contact to Trish, within Dept of Homeland Security's US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), to allow ICAV and other adoptee organisations a central point of contact.

DOS agreed to facilitate a joint meeting with DOS & USCIS whereby adoptees could provide input to USCIS about their experiences of Citizenship processing and suggest/request improvements.

DOS has agreed to be a central point of communication to clarify for intercountry adoptees, based on their specific situation, what the process should be and who they should contact. Write to DOS at adoption@state.gov

DOS has agreed to provide Becky Belcore with a USCIS contact relevant to legislation to discuss the Bill being presented again to Congress.

Thank you!

ICAV thanks DOS for their time and willingness to discuss adult intercountry adoptee needs. We look forward to future meetings to further aid citizenship difficulties facing US adoptees.

Adoptee Profiles

Lynelle Long: Vietnamese Adoptee residing in Australia (Sydney), Founder of ICAV created in 1998, Adoptee Representative to former Australian Government Attorney General's Dept (AGD) on the National InterCountry Adoption Advisory Group NICAAG (2008 - 2010), Facilitator & Convenor of ICAV & Australian Federal Gov 2015 Meetings; intercountry adoption education/seminar/conference presenter to Australian Federal & State Governments & NGO Post Adoption Providers; adoptee advocate.

Joy Alessi: Korean Adoptee residing in the USA (Texas); Adoptee Without Citizenship (AWOC) since 1967; Adoptee Rights Campaign (ARC) Gulf Coast Director and Board Member; Contributor to Seoul Adoption Naturalization Deportation (AND), Contributor to Korean Adoptee Researchers' Memory Archive (KARMA).

Maline Carroll: Haitian Adoptee residing in USA (Massachusetts); ARC East Coast Director; Founder of NOOMA Consulting - a Post Adoption Support service company providing Adoptive parents with resources and more effective ways to raise adoptees of colour.

Sara: Iranian Adoptee residing in USA (California); ARC West Coast Director; has been active with legislative visits in California.

Becky Belcore: Korean Adoptee residing in USA (Chicago); Co-Director of the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) and a member of ARC.