

Joint Council Update

Program Advocacy
Date October 14, 2008
Regarding *I-600A Process*

Dear Families & Friends,

After advocating on behalf of adoptive families for the past 6 months, *Joint Council* is very pleased to confirm that USCIS has announced a very positive ruling concerning the I-600A process.

In summary, it is our understanding that, effective immediately, families who filed Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition, prior to April 1, 2008 and whose USCIS approval of that petition (aka the I-171H) has not expired, will be able to proceed with their adoption under the I-600A process if they take certain steps while their approval remains valid. This means that families with valid Form I-600A approvals will not be required to transition to The Hague process via Form I-800A. In order to maintain their status as 'grandfathered' cases, families with non-expired Form I-600A approvals must request a one-time free extension. Then, prior to the expiration of the one-time free extension, families must file a new Form I-600A and pay the appropriate fee.

It is also our understanding that families with a Form I-600A approval that has expired and who have not obtained an extension or filed a new Form I-600A, will need to undertake the Hague process. The Hague process will also apply to any petitioner who has not completed their adoption by 2014.

As we noted in our Position Statement, this ruling will save adoptive families thousands of dollars, eliminate countless sleepless nights and ensures that their adoption can proceed to completion.

On behalf of over 10,000 adoptive families, *Joint Council* extends its appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their tireless efforts.

Diane Kunz, Executive Director of the Center for Adoption Policy
Dianne Pearce, Waiting Parent and Co-Organizer of the Fairness for Families Petition
Debbie Reynolds, Joint Council China Caucus Co-Chairperson
Kathleen Strottman, Executive Director of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute
David Yurkovich, Waiting Parent and Co-Organizer of the Fairness for Families Petition
Members of the United States Congress
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

We offer our collective congratulations to everyone who participated in the *Joint Council Call-To-*

Action and the *Adoption for All: Fairness for Families* petition. And we also send our congratulations to all who participated in the countless meetings, conference calls and emails over the past 6-months. *Joint Council* is built on a principle of collaboration and this very successful effort clearly demonstrates this principle in action. Our collective voice is definitely stronger than any singular organization or individual.

Joint Council notes that our interpretation of the ruling is offered as a courtesy only and should not be used in making determinations or decisions. Please refer to the full text of the announcements by USCIS which can be found at [USCIS Announcement](#) and [USCIS Q&A](#) in making any decisions.

Joint Council will provide more specifics as they become available and asks you to visit our website for the latest news and updates.

Best Wishes & Congratulations,

Tom



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