

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Carl Risch
Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs
Bureau of Consular Affairs
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-0099

Dear Assistant Secretary Risch,

We write with regard to ongoing changes to the accreditation policies and procedures for intercountry adoption service providers (ASPs). We appreciate the efforts that the Department of State (DOS), and specifically the Office of Children's Issues within the Bureau of Consular Affairs, has made to inform our offices of these changes and their rationale.

We continue to hear concerns, both from inside and outside of Congress, about the policy changes faced by intercountry adoption service providers, including concerns about the new fee structure. We appreciate the ongoing dialogue between DOS, Congress, the Adoption Service Providers (ASPs), and other members of the adoption community, and want to ensure that the dialogue continues and that adoption stakeholders are consulted in ongoing efforts to develop and implement policies that facilitate intercountry adoption.

With the aim of improving intercountry adoption, we request written answers to the following questions:

- 1) On February 1, 2018, DOS released a new fee structure for the new accrediting entity, Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity, Inc. (IAAME) and its parent organization, the Florida-based Partnership for Strong Families (PSF). What factors were considered when deciding the fee structure? Did DOS seek input from the adoption community, including IAAME, ASPs, and other members of the adoption community prior to setting the new fee structure?
- 2) We understand that the new fee schedule has been structured to ensure that IAAME and PSF will both be able to conduct sufficient oversight of ASPs and recoup their startup costs. With respect to the latter, how often will DOS review the fees and readjust them (in accordance with 22 CFR. 96.8)? Will DOS consult with IAAME, ASPs, and the greater adoption community to determine if adoption fees need to be restructured?
- 3) Historically, it has proven challenging to find stable, permanent homes for sibling groups, and the decision to make no exceptions to the "per adoption" fee for sibling groups could potentially add to the challenge of finding a permanent family. What was the rationale behind the decision to make no exceptions to this fee? Were ASPs and/or members of the adoption community consulted prior to this decision?

- 4) We have also heard concerns over the potentially untenable costs to smaller agencies of complying with oversight and maintenance procedures, including increased staffing costs and forensic accounting needs of agencies who may require time to comply with new policies and procedures. Can you clarify what ASPs will be required to do? What is DOS doing to answer questions and to provide assistance to ASPs?

As members of the Congressional Adoption Caucus, we work to ensure that legal and well-vetted intercountry adoptions remain possible for families. We are grateful for DOS's ongoing commitment to a strong intercountry adoption system that works to ensure every child is provided with safe, permanent, nurturing family care. Thank you for your time and attention to these questions. We look forward to your response and continuing dialogue on these matters.


Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Roy Blunt
United States Senator


John Boozman
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Steve Daines
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator

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Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James M. Inhofe". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "James" and the last name "Inhofe" being clearly legible.

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary Peters". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first name "Gary" and the last name "Peters" being clearly legible.

Gary Peters
United States Senator