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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### SB 927 (Choi) - Intercountry adoption finalized in a foreign country

**Version:** April 23, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** May 11, 2026

**Policy Vote:** JUD. 13 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill permits a person born in a foreign country and adopted by a U.S. citizen in another country to petition the family court for a record establishing the facts of the adoption, if the person's parents and the adoption agency that facilitated the adoption failed to file the petition in a timely manner.

**Fiscal Impact:** This bill could result in additional, unknown cost pressure to the courts to adjudicate new cases each year for adoptees who lack readoption paperwork and elect to file petitions. While the superior courts are not funded on a workload basis, the increase in workload could result in delayed court services and put pressure on the General Fund to fund additional staff and resources (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund).

**Background:** Existing law establishes specific processes and requirements for an intercountry adoption of an unmarried minor, and processes for convention adoptions and non-convention adoptions. It establishes a procedure through which a state resident who has adopted a minor from a foreign country can establish a record to prove the facts of the foreign adoption by filing a petition to readopt within the earlier of 60 days of the adoptee's entry into the United States or the adoptee's 16th birthday. The petition must include specified components, including a copy of the certified or otherwise official copy of the foreign decree, order, or certification of adoption that reflects finalization of the adoption into the foreign country. Existing law provides that a readoption order shall not be granted unless the court receives a copy of these reports, and the court shall consider the postplacement visit or visits and the previously completed home study when deciding whether to grant or deny the petition for readoption.

Existing law provides that, if an adoptive parent who has adopted a child through an intercountry adoption that is finalized in a foreign country fails to file a petition by the earlier of 60 days of the child's entry into the United States or the child's 16th birthday, or fails to provide a copy of the petition to each adoption agency that provided the adoption services to the adoptive parent, then the adoption agency that facilitated the adoption shall file a petition within 90 days of the child's entry into the United States and shall provide a file-marked copy of the petition to the adoptive parent and to any other adoption agency that provided services to the adoptive parent within five days of filing.

**Proposed Law:** This bill permits an adoptee who was adopted through an intercountry adoption to file a petition for readoption on their own behalf if both of the following conditions are met: the adoptive parent or parents failed to file a petition within 60 days of the child's entry into the United States or the child's 16th birthday, whichever is

earlier; and the adoption agency that provided adoption services failed to file a petition within 90 days of the child's entry into the United States.

**Related Legislation:** AB 677 (Choi, Chapter 805, Statutes of 2019) revised the intercountry adoption recognition process and established a process if the adoptive parent of a foreign adoption fails to complete readoption.

**Staff Comments:** According to the analysis of this bill by the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Currently, a child born in a foreign country and adopted by American parents is automatically a U.S. citizen. Federal law establishes different processes for having such a child's citizenship recognized based on the nature of the proceedings in the child's original country of origin and type of visa issued to the child to enter the United States. The prior law for naturalizing a foreign-born child was, unfortunately, significantly more complicated than it is today, and many foreign-born adoptees have learned that their adoptive parents simply never completed the naturalization process. As a result, people who were brought here by Americans and have lived here for their entire lives now live in fear of deportation under President Trump's anti-immigrant policies. Although bipartisan legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress to close this loophole, Congressional leadership refuses to schedule the bills for hearings.

This bill is intended to help foreign-born adopted persons obtain important state documents when their parents or an adoption agency have failed to follow the appropriate processes. Specifically, this bill permits an adopted person to file a petition for recognition of their foreign adoption when their parents, or the adoption agency, failed to timely file such a petition, which will result in proof of adoption and entitle them to a new birth certificate issued by the State Registrar.

According to the author: "Since the 1950's, California has consistently ranked as one of the top destinations for foreign adoptee placements in the nation. When an intercountry adoption takes place, it is the responsibility of the adoptive parent or parents to finalize the adoption of their child once they reach the United States. However, the adoptive parents do not always complete the process. Each time an adoptive parent in California fails to finalize their child's intercountry adoption, the adoptee is never issued a delayed registration of birth from the State Registrar to prove they are a legal US resident. After decades of adoptive parents failing to finalize foreign adoptions, tens of thousands of former adoptees are adults living in the United States without necessary identification or documentation, vulnerable to possible deportations.

I introduced AB 677 in 2019 to ensure that either a parent or adoption agency would finalize intercountry adoptions in order for adoptees to establish a record of their adoption prior to reaching adulthood. SB 927 provides a process for foreign adoptees who are adults to petition on their own behalf when both their adoptive parents and adoption agency fail to complete their adoption. This ensures that intercountry adoptees can establish an official record of their adoption and legal residency in the US."

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