

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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Bill No: SB 927  
Author: Choi (R), et al.  
Amended: 6/3/26  
Vote: 21

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**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE:** 13-0, 4/21/26

**AYES:** Umberg, Niello, Allen, Ashby, Caballero, Durazo, Laird, Reyes, Stern, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE:** 7-0, 5/14/26

**AYES:** Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

**SENATE FLOOR:** 33-0, 5/22/26

**AYES:** Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**NO VOTE RECORDED:** Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Hurtado, Niello, Padilla, Stern

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:** 70-0, 7/2/26 (Consent) - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Intercountry adoption finalized in a foreign country

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill permits a person of any age 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 timely file such a petition; and permits a court to grant a petition for readoption for a person adopted through an intercountry adoption, even if the petitioner does not have all of the adoption documentation, when certain conditions are met.

*Assembly Amendments* authorize a court to grant a petition for readoption, when the parents or adoption agency did not properly have an intercountry adoption recognized by the state, even in the absence of certain documentation relating to the adoption, if the petitioner can establish certain facts by a preponderance of the evidence.

## **ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Defines the following relevant terms:
  - a) “Adoptive parent” means a person who has obtained an order of adoption of a minor child, or in the case of an adult adoption, an adult. (Family (Fam.) Code, § 8503.)
  - b) “Intercountry adoption” means the adoption of a foreign-born child for whom federal law makes a special immigration visa available, and includes completion of the adoption in the child’s native country or completion of the adoption in this state. (Fam. Code, § 8527.)
  - c) “Licensed adoption agency” means any agency licensed by the State Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide services including assessing prospective adoptive parents, matching parents and children for adoption, and, in the case of a full-service adoption agency, assuming care, custody, and control of a child through relinquishment of the child to the agency or termination of parental rights. (Fam. Code, § 8530; *see also* Health & Safety (Saf.) Code, § 1502(a)(9) & (10).)
  - d) “Adoption service” means specified services, including (1) identifying a child for adoption and arranging adoption; (2) securing the necessary consent to termination of parental rights and to adoption; (3) performing a background study on a child or a home study on any prospective adoptive parent, and reporting on the study; and (4) monitoring a case after a child has been placed with any prospective parent until final adoption. (Fam. Code, § 8900.5(b).)
- 2) Establishes the processes and procedures for the adoption of an unmarried minor. (Fam. Code, Division (div.) 13, pt. 2, §§ 8600 et seq.)
- 3) Establishes specific processes and requirements for an intercountry adoption of an unmarried minor. (Fam. Code, div. 13, pt. 2, Chapter (ch.) 4, §§ 8900 et seq.)

- 4) 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 all of the following:
  - a) A certified or otherwise official copy of the foreign decree, order, or certification of adoption that reflects finalization of the adoption into the foreign country.
  - b) A certified or otherwise official copy of the child's foreign birth certificate.
  - c) A certified translation of all required documents that are not written in English; the court shall accept the certified translation, if any, that was completed abroad for purposes of obtaining the child's visa or passport.
  - d) Proof that the child was granted lawful entry into the United States as an immediate relative of the adoptive parent or parents.
  - e) A report from at least one postplacement home visit by an intercountry adoption agency or a contractor of that agency licensed to provide intercountry adoption services in the state.
  - f) A copy of the home study report previously completed for the international finalized adoption by an adoption agency authorized to provide intercountry adoption services. (Fam. Code, § 8919(a).)
- 5) Provides that a readoption order petitioned for under 4) shall not be granted unless the court receives a copy of the reports listed in 4)(e) and (f), 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. (Fam. Code, § 8919(b).)
- 6) 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 pursuant to 4) 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.

- a) An adoptive parent shall be liable to the adoption agency for all costs and fees incurred as a result of good faith actions taken by the adoption agency to fulfill this requirement.
  - b) If the adoption agency fails to file a petition as required, DSS may take appropriate disciplinary action against the adoption agency if it is licensed in the state and DSS has actual or constructive knowledge that the petition was not filed. (Fam. Code, § 8919(c).)
- 7) If the court finds that the child who is the subject of a petition in 4) may be the subject of human trafficking or may be a victim of, or at risk of, abandonment, abuse, or neglect, the court shall, in accordance with existing law, notify all appropriate authorities. (Fam. Code, § 8919(d).)
- 8) Provides that, within 10 business days of the granting of a petition in 4), the clerk of the court shall submit to the State Registrar the order granting the petition to adopt; upon receipt, the State Registrar shall issue a delayed registration of live birth in accordance with 11), below that lists the adoptive parent or parents as the child's legal parent or parents. (Fam. Code, § 8919(e).)
- 9) Provides that a state resident who has adopted a child through an intercountry adoption that is finalized in a foreign country may obtain a birth certificate for a child in accordance with 12) or 13), below. (Fam. Code, § 8919(f).)
- 10) Provides that a Convention adoption certificate or, in outgoing cases, a Convention custody declaration, obtained pursuant to specified federal regulations, shall be recognized as a final valid adoption for purposes of all state and local laws. (Fam. Code, § 8925.)
- 11) Provides that a court report of adoption received from any court of record in the State, wherein the birth occurred outside the United States, the Territories, or Canada shall constitute a court order of delayed registration of birth, provided the court report contains a statement of the date and place of birth. (Health & Saf. Code, § 102695.)
- 12) Provides that a new birth certificate shall be established by the State Registrar upon receipt of either of the following:
- a) A report of readoption from any court of record that has record of jurisdiction in this state, another state, the District of Columbia, in any territory of the United States, or in any foreign country, for any child born

in California and whose birth certificate is on file in the office of the State Registrar.

- b) A readoption order issued pursuant to 4)-9). (Health & Saf. Code, § 102635.)
- 13) Provides that a verified petition may be filed by any beneficially interested person with the clerk of the superior court in and for (1) the county in which the birth, death, or marriage is alleged to have occurred, (2) the county of residence of the person whose birth or marriage it is sought to establish, or (3) the county in which the person was domiciled at the date of death in order to judicially establish the fact of, and the time and place of, a birth, death, or marriage that is not registered or for which a certified copy is not obtainable. (Health & Saf. Code, § 103450.)

This bill:

- 1) Permits an adoptee of any age 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:
  - a) 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
  - b) The adoption agency that provided adoption services failed to file a petition within 90 days of the child's entry into the United States.
- 2) Permits a court to grant a petition for readoption that does not include all of the otherwise-required documentation if the petitioner establishes all of the following by a preponderance of the evidence:
  - a) That they are the adoptee, including using the evidence described in 3) to establish their identity as the adoptee and the consistent use of that identity over time.
  - b) That one or more of the required documents cannot be obtained due to the passage of time or other circumstances beyond their control, including, but not limited to, the death or unavailability of the adoptive parent or parents and the closure, dissolution, or unavailability of the adoption agency.
  - c) The fundamental facts necessary for the court to make the findings required to grant the petition.

- 3) Permits evidence presented to the court in a proceeding under 2) to include documentary and nondocumentary evidence, including, but not limited to, testimony, declarations, court records, agency records, correspondence, and other corroborating sources of information the court deems sufficient to establish the fundamental facts necessary to make the findings required to grant the petition.
- 4) Provides that no single category of evidence shall be required or determinative to the decision of whether to grant a petition under 2); the court shall, instead, evaluate the totality of the circumstances and the relevance and reliability of the presented evidence to determine whether the petitioner has met the burden of proof to establish the fundamental facts necessary for the court to make the findings required to grant the petition.

### **Comments**

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 refuse to schedule the bills for hearings.

This bill is intended to help foreign-born adopted persons obtain important state documents when their parents or the adoption agency 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; amendments taken in the Assembly also permit an adoptee to have their adoption finalized even if they are missing certain documentation due to circumstances out of their control, provided they can establish the facts of the adoption through a preponderance of the evidence. These provisions will enable adult adoptees to receive legal proof of their adoption and entitle them to a new birth certificate issued by the State

Registrar. These documents cannot, on their own, confer citizenship on the adopted person, but they may be able to help them on their path to naturalization or otherwise establish a right to various privileges and entitlements.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill presents likely minor and absorbable costs to courts to consider readoption petitions, as provided by this bill.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 7/10/26)

Adoptee Rights Law Center  
California Alliance for Adoptee Rights  
Concerned United Birthparents  
Sacramento Valley Korean American Community  
Saving Our Sisters  
U.S. Korea Alliance Association & Combined Korea USA Veterans Assoc.  
One individual

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 7/10/26)

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to Concerned United Birthparents:

SB 927 addresses a longstanding gap in California law. While existing statutes require adoptive parents or agencies to finalize intercountry adoptions during childhood, many individuals adopted decades ago were left without completed legal documentation, through no fault of their own. As a result, some adult adoptees lack the ability to prove their legal identity or family relationships.

This bill provides a narrow and practical remedy by allowing an adult adoptee to petition the court to finalize their adoption when both the adoptive parents and the responsible agency failed to do so. Upon approval, the individual may obtain a delayed registration of birth and the appropriate documentation.

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:** 70-0, 7/2/26

**AYES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor,

Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Bains, Bryan, Calderon, Chen, Elhawary, Ellis, Papan, Ransom, Sanchez

Prepared by: Allison Whitt Meredith / JUD. / (916) 651-4113  
7/30/26 14:49:32

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