



## Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2018: Bill Summary

The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2018 ([S. 2522](#); [H.R. 5233](#)) would provide U.S. citizenship to individuals born outside of the United States who were adopted as children by American parents. The bill was introduced on March 8, 2018 in the U.S. Senate by Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Missouri) and Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) with [two original cosponsors](#) and in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Christopher Smith (R-New Jersey) and Adam Smith (D-Washington) with [four original cosponsors](#).

This bipartisan bill would fix a loophole that denies some adoptees the right to citizenship. The [Child Citizenship Act \(CCA\) of 2000](#) guarantees automatic citizenship to qualifying adoptees born outside of the U.S. under the age of 18. However, the CCA did not apply to adoptees who were over the age of 18 years when the law went into effect on February 27, 2001. As a result, an estimated 35,000 adoptees who were legally adopted by U.S. citizens but were over the age of 18 when the CCA went into effect failed to receive U.S. citizenship. Many of these adoptees live in the U.S. susceptible to deportation, unable to travel outside of the U.S. and unable to work legally.

### What the Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2018 Does

- The bill would grant an adoptee born outside of the U.S. who was adopted by a U.S. citizen parent automatic U.S. citizenship if he or she meets the following conditions:
  1. Adopted by a U.S. citizen parent before reaching the age of 18;
  2. Physically present in the U.S. in the legal custody of a U.S. citizen parent (pursuant to a lawful admission) before reaching the age of 18;
  3. Never acquired U.S. citizenship before the enactment of this bill; and
  4. Resides in the U.S. on the date of the enactment of this bill.
- The bill would also allow certain adopted individuals residing outside of the U.S. to automatically become a U.S. citizen once he or she is physically present in the U.S. (pursuant to a lawful admission), if they meet the following conditions:
  - Meet points 1, 2 and 3 described above;
  - Undergo and pass criminal background checks that shows they do not have any unresolved criminal activity; and
  - Have not been found guilty of a deportable offense as a result of the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against another person and been deported.

### Who May Benefit from the Adoptee Citizenship Act?

- [Justin](#), 33-years-old, was adopted from South Korea at age 2. He grew up in Oregon, where he played basketball in high school and remembers pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag before every game. He was 18 when the CCA went into effect. A few years later, when he applied for a job, he discovered he was not a U.S. citizen.
- [Andrea](#), 35-years-old, was adopted from South Korea as a child. She moved to Arizona at age 27, and had trouble securing a job because of modern employment verifications and could not renew her driver's license.

- [Stacy](#), a mother of two in Michigan, was adopted from South Korea as a young child. She learned five years ago that she was not a U.S. citizen when she had trouble receiving a U.S. passport to travel abroad. She became worried about losing her job if her employers found out her status and about being separated from her U.S. citizen children if she was deported. She was eventually able to secure lawful permanent resident status, but is now concerned about other adoptees living in the U.S. without citizenship.
- [Mauricio](#), a sheet metal apprentice from Wisconsin and entrepreneur, came to the U.S. when he was 18 months old with his mother, who had married a U.S. citizen. Mauricio's American stepfather went through the legal process and adopted him. The family believed there was nothing else they needed to do and that Mauricio was a citizen. Years later when Mauricio was returning to the U.S. from vacation, he was detained for a conviction from several years earlier for which he had already served his sentence and was deported to Costa Rica. Mauricio does not speak Spanish.

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