

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 6, 2002

Commissioner James W. Ziglar
U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service
425 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Commissioner Ziglar,

We are very troubled by the moratorium you have placed on orphan visas for children adopted from Cambodia. The lack of outreach by the INS gives adoptive parents and the community-at-large the impression that INS' actions in this matter have been arbitrary and based on general suspicions rather than substantive evidence. Given the important interests at stake, we believe that INS has a responsibility to examine and review these adoption petitions on a case-by-case basis and work to deliver a solution that serves the best interests of all involved.

It was our understanding that in early December INS and the Department of State had agreed to transfer the processing of Cambodian adoptions to the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, effective Feb. 1, 2002. This announcement indicated to many members of Congress, who subsequently notified their families, that the pending cases would be processed. On December 21st, however, your agency suspended processing all Cambodian adoptions, which was contrary to previous announcements by INS and the Department of State.

We also have come to understand the U.S. government, through the Department of State, encouraged the government of Cambodia to suspend adoptions to American families in Cambodia. This decision has effectively denied countless U.S. families from traveling to Cambodia to finalize their adoptions and be united with the children they already consider part of their families. It is concerning to us that the U.S. Department of State and INS took this action without consulting, or at very least notifying, any members of Congress about their intent to do so.

American families deserve better. We fully support the efforts of the INS and the Department of State to eliminate abuses, such as baby trafficking, that harm adoptive parents, birth parents, and the children themselves. But our government also has a responsibility to conduct these activities in a manner that is responsive and respectful to U.S. citizens who offer a loving home to children who desperately need one.

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We ask for you to review your decisions regarding adoption in Cambodia and we look forward to working with you to achieve a reasonable resolution to this difficult issue.

Sincerely,

W. Jay Lankford

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Tom Lantos

J. I. Pickens

Mike DeLoe

Rick Santorum

Chip Pickering

Mike Shomps

Kevin Stans

David Chelms

Anne M. Norbury

Jim Oberstar

July 1. Costello

James Greenwood

Gene Miller

Mike Bilirakis

Dillian P. Lipinski

Jesse Helms

Max Cleland
Pat G. Fitzgerald
Patty Murray

John
Carl Levin
Deborah Pryor

cc: