

# Permanency for Children Act of 2017

H.R. 3092

Responsible fatherhood registries—also known as putative father registries, paternity registries, or paternal claim registrars—allow an unmarried, uninvolved biological father who registers in a timely manner to receive notice of any pending or future adoption proceedings involving his putative (or possible) child. The *Permanency for Children Act* would modify the Federal Parent Locator Service to help state agencies find information about registered putative fathers in other states, providing a broader, more efficient way to locate biological fathers during a pending adoption.

## The Purpose of a Registry

Quickly identifying biological fathers after birth is crucial to providing stable, supportive environments for children. These registries serve several purposes. They:

- » Protect a biological father's parental rights and balance the responsibility of both biological parents.
- » Decrease the likelihood of a child being placed for adoption without the biological father's knowledge.
- » Provide greater stability for the child by decreasing the risk of the adoption being contested.
- » Provide assurance to adoptive parents that both biological parents have been allowed the opportunity to participate in the placement decision.

## The Current System

The Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS), authorized by Congress in 1975, is an assembly of systems designed to assist states in locating noncustodial fathers, putative fathers, and custodial parties for the establishment of paternity and child support obligations.

18,329

*infants under the age of two were adopted in 2014*

## The Proposed Changes

The *Permanency for Children Act* would:

- » Improve the search functions of the FPLS, increasing its efficiency while also maintaining privacy protections.
- » Include state registry search functions, which would improve cross-referencing between states and allow them to electronically exchange identifying information.
- » Protect registered fathers against court actions in unknown states where the child or mother may have traveled or where the adoptive parents live.
- » Create a framework that assists the creation of a putative father registry in states that don't currently have one.
- » Provide best practices to improve existing registries.
- » Identify administrative and legislative options to ensure that every putative father has access to the protections of a putative father registry, regardless of where he lives.

*Currently, the FPLS can only be searched by social security number or date of birth.*



Source: Adoption: By the Numbers, National Council For Adoption, 2017



National Council  
For Adoption

Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, National Council For Adoption's mission is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration.

[adoptioncouncil.org](http://adoptioncouncil.org) | [nca@adoptioncouncil.org](mailto:nca@adoptioncouncil.org) | (703) 299-6633

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption is a non-profit organization.