FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Lauren Koch
(703) 216-4756
lkoch@adoptioncouncil.org

Russian Embassy Event Contact: Dmitry (Dima) Fasolyak
(301) 983-4142
dmaaru@gmail.com

Russian Federation Council Sends Ban on Adoption to President Vladimir Putin

December 26, 2012 – Alexandria, VA – The Russian Federation Council, the upper parliamentary house, has unanimously passed a bill that proposes a ban on adoption of Russian orphans by United States citizens. The bill has been sent to President Vladimir Putin for his signature.

"If President Putin chooses to sign this bill it will close adoption to American citizens. A ban on Russian adoptions would be heartbreaking for the many thousands of children outside of family care who are languishing in Russian institutions. After much time, effort, and goodwill between Russian and American actors to negotiate the new Intercountry Adoption Agreement that took effect in November, it would be a great injustice to destroy their work and children's hope for a family before we've been able to see the positive results that we believe are on the way," says Lauren Koch of National Council For Adoption.

If President Putin signs this bill into law, he effectively strips the hope of family from thousands of Russian orphans that may have found their way to a family in the United States. About 60,000 Russian children have found safety, stability, and the opportunity to thrive in American families.

One shining example is a young man named Sasha D’Jamoos. Sasha was born in Russia with a disability that left him unable to walk. Since joining his American family he received surgery, learned to skillfully use prosthetics, and has climbed Kilimanjaro. He is also thriving as a University student.

As part of his Voice of the Child campaign, Sasha has written a letter pleading with President Putin not to sign this bill into law. A draft of this letter will be delivered to the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. today, Wednesday, December 26th at 3:00 pm EST by adoptees and adoption advocates (Contact Dima Fasolyak to attend the event). You can join Sasha's Voice of the Child campaign by signing his letter asking President Putin to act compassionately and preserve adoption between Russia and the United States. To sign Sasha’s letter, click here.

“There is terrible irony in the fact that America’s decision to speak out against human rights violations may cause the Russian government to deny many thousands of Russian orphans the possibility to grow up in loving, adoptive families,” says Chuck Johnson, president and CEO of National Council For Adoption. “The plight of orphaned children worldwide, so many of whom
spend their young lives in institutions, is itself a violation of every child’s right to a safe, nurturing, and permanent family. Often inadequately cared for, lacking in love and security, deprived of necessary education, healthcare, and support, too many orphaned children either die in institutions or ‘age out’ into a world in which they continue to suffer the harshest of injustices, alone and without a voice.”

On behalf of the tens of thousands of children whose human right to a family will be violated if this law is passed, the National Council For Adoption calls on Congress, President Barack Obama, and President Putin to act now and act compassionately. "As advocates for children who know and believe that intercountry adoption is in the best interest of many children, we humbly plead with President Putin and Russian officials to consider how this intercountry adoption ban could hurt Russia's voiceless orphanded children" says Chuck Johnson.

###