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NCFA Responds to Possible Russian Ban of Intercountry Adoptions to the U.S

Russian Parliament Proposes Ban in Retaliation for the Magnitsky Act; International Politicking Would Force Orphaned Children to Pay the Price

December 18, 2012 – Alexandria, VA – Legislation has been introduced in the Russian Parliament that would ban intercountry adoptions with the United States.

This radical amendment to the Dima Yakovlev Law was proposed as retaliation against U.S. passage of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act, a bill that imposes sanctions against Russian officials perceived by the U.S. to be guilty of human rights violations in Russia. Among the sanctions is a prohibition on Russian criminals visiting the United States.

This threatened ban on intercountry adoption comes after years of discussion between Russia and the United States to address areas of needed reform, strengthen protections and increase accountability, and better serve adopted children and adoptive families. Recent negotiations resulted in a bilateral agreement between Russia and the U.S., which went into effect on November 1, 2012.

“Orphaned children could become collateral damage in this round of international politicking,” says Chuck Johnson, president and CEO of the National Council For Adoption. “The proposed Russian amendment is a punitive, excessive, and highly unfortunate reaction to a U.S. policy that has absolutely nothing to do with intercountry adoption. The opposition of some Russian politicians to the Magnitsky Act, which prevents Russian human rights violators from entering the U.S., should not threaten the possibility of adoption for orphaned and vulnerable Russian children. NCFA and other U.S. adoption advocates are pleading with Russian officials to do the right thing for the more than 700,000 children currently living in institutions in Russia who deserve loving families of their own.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin, while displeased with the Magnitsky Law, promised an “adequate and not excessive” response. “Banning intercountry adoption is excessive,” says Johnson. “Russian orphans are counting on their President to hear their voices.”

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