

# DON NICKLES

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ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

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## CONGRESS SENDS NICKLES' CHILD CITIZENSHIP ACT TO PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Don Nickles (R-OK) today announced final congressional passage of his legislation to make it easier for foreign-born children adopted by U.S. families to receive American citizenship.

The bipartisan Child Citizenship Act of 2000 passed the Senate by unanimous consent late Thursday night. The legislation was sponsored by Nickles and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). U.S. Representatives Lamar Smith (R-TX) and William Delahunt (D-MA) led the effort to pass the bill in the House of Representatives.

“More than 15,000 foreign-born children are adopted by U.S. families every year,” said Nickles. “I look forward to this legislation being signed into law to ease the paperwork burden on these new families. They shouldn’t be buried under a mountain of red tape just because they’ve opened their homes and their lives to these children.”

This bill provides automatic U.S. citizenship to foreign-born children adopted by at least one citizen parent. The child’s U.S. citizenship becomes automatic once the child is finally adopted and is residing in the United States pursuant to a lawful admission for permanent residence. These provisions will become effective 120 days after the bill is signed by the President.

“Adoptive families across the United States thank the members of Congress and especially the sponsors of H.R. 2883 for their efforts on behalf of children adopted internationally,” said Dr. John L. Williams, President & CEO of Holt International Children’s Services. “In nearly 45 years of placing children with U.S. parents, Holt International Children’s Services has seen many changes, but this legislation is one of the most significant developments in the history of intercountry adoption. For years to come H.R. 2883 will provide the protection of U.S. citizenship to children who are growing up in communities all across the United States.”

Currently, natural-born children of U.S. citizens born abroad receive automatic U.S. citizenship as soon as the parents present proof of citizenship at a U.S. embassy. Citizenship laws have been amended over the years to make less burdensome the process by which a foreign-born child adopted by a U.S. citizen acquires citizenship. This bill continues and completes that process by conferring citizenship automatically.

The House passed the bill by unanimous consent in September. The bill will next be sent to the President for his signature.