

**Statement for the Record of the Honorable Chair Zoe Lofgren
Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship
House Committee on the Judiciary**

H.R. 681, For the Relief of Rebecca Trimble

April 28, 2021

Rebecca Trimble is a married mother of two living in Bethel, Alaska with her husband John, a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. She has lived in the United States since she was just days old.

Before Rebecca was born, her adoptive parents traveled to Mexico to meet her birth mother who was only 13 years old when Rebecca was born. Rebecca has had no contact with her biological mother since her birth, and she is currently unaware of her whereabouts.

When she was born, Rebecca's adoptive parents were told by the hospital that a birth certificate listing them as Rebecca's parents was all that was required to formalize the adoption. When the family returned to the United States, U.S. border officials waived the family through the port of entry when they crossed the southern border.

Once they were home and settled in Salem, Oregon, Rebecca's parents presented her birth certificate to the Social Security Administration and received a social security number in her name. This further solidified their belief that Rebecca's adoption was complete and recognized in the United States.

Rebecca eventually moved to Washington with her mother when her parents divorced. She graduated from Hudson's Bay High School in Vancouver, Washington in 2008. That same year, having no reason to believe she was not a U.S. citizen, Rebecca voted in the presidential election.

In August 2012, Rebecca married her high school sweetheart, John Trimble, a U.S. citizen who is now a dentist in the U.S. Army Reserve. It was also in 2012, when Rebecca applied for and was denied a REAL ID compliant driver's license, that she learned her birth certificate was invalid and she was not a U.S. citizen.

In considering private immigration bills, precedent in the modern congressional era is an important consideration. In the modern era, Congress has passed private bills related to adoptions that were not finalized in accordance with immigration law requirements. There is bipartisan agreement that this case meets that precedent.

Although Rebecca is not currently in removal proceedings, she has no path to lawful status in the United States. In October 2015, Rebecca requested “parole in place” as the spouse of a member of the U.S. military. In February 2016, USCIS denied the application after concluding that Rebecca was “inspected and admitted” to the United States when she was waved through the border as a baby.

In December 2016, the couple concurrently filed an immigrant visa petition and application for adjustment of status with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In February 2020, USCIS denied the adjustment application on grounds that Rebecca had unlawfully voted in an election.

Rebecca filed a motion to reopen the application in March 2020, requesting reconsideration of her eligibility for an exception to the bar on unlawful voting. Although Rebecca reasonably believed she was a U.S. citizen when she voted, USCIS denied the motion on grounds that she was never formally adopted.

Rebecca and her husband, along with their two young children, now live in the remote town of Bethel, Alaska, a recognized Health Professional Shortage Area, where Dr. Trimble provides dental care at a local clinic.

Although she has known no other home, Rebecca has no options for relief through our legal immigration system. Her case presents precisely the type of extraordinary circumstances that private bills are meant to address.

I ask my colleagues to vote in favor of requesting a DHS investigative report on behalf of Rebecca Trimble, the beneficiary of H.R. 681.