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# NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACTS:**

Dean Phillips, counsel

Orphans Court Procedural Rules Committee

(717) 795-2042

Art Heinz, AOPC Communications Coordinator (717) 795-2062

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*Pennsylvania Supreme Court*

## **New Statewide Rules Issued to Standardize Foreign Adoption Registration Procedures**

**HARRISBURG, August 30, 2006** — The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania today issued new rules to assist parents who adopt a child from a foreign nation by standardizing procedures to complete the adoption registration process in the Commonwealth's 67 counties.

The changes were prompted by new legislation approved by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Ed Rendell as Act 96 of 2006. The new law — designed to make foreign adoption procedures less burdensome and more uniform — takes effect Sept. 5.

“These rules create new forms and procedures that were developed and implemented in timely response to the new legislation,” Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy said. “It is important that branches of government work together on administrative issues to enhance the level of services provided to the Commonwealth's citizens. Implementation of these new rules ensures the needs of the prospective adoptive parents and the child are adequately addressed.”

The new court rules provide a standardized foreign adoption registration form and instructions for its use. The instructions clearly explain how to complete the form along with a list of possible reasons the court may consider to deny the petition.

The rule changes also eliminate the need for most adopting parents to attend a hearing or obtain legal counsel so long as they provide an authenticated copy of a foreign adoption decree, the child's visa and some form of birth identification or an affidavit — if no birth certificate is obtainable. Once the court concludes the foreign adoption was full and final the Clerk of Courts is required to enter the adoption on the record, issue a certificate of adoption and send the documentation to the state Department of Health, Division of Vital Records. In those cases in which the foreign adoption decree is not full and final, a “readoption” is required according to provisions of the Adoption Act and local rules of each county court.

The new rules were recommended to the court by the Orphans' Court Procedural Rules Committee whose seven members review current statewide practice and procedure and recommend new rules as necessary.

*[Attached is a copy of the Supreme Court order, new court rule and standardized adoption petition.]*