

courts as it pertains to presidential eligibility. Perhaps the closest possible court challenge occurred when former Michigan Governor George Romney ran a brief campaign for the Republican party presidential nomination in 1968. Romney was born in Mexico, the son of American missionaries. Had Romney gained the Republican nomination for president, it would have forced a clarification of the meaning of natural born citizen. But Romney's campaign was short-lived and folded after three months, so the question was never addressed.

Absent any judicial interpretation of the phrase, the senators say that in introducing the Natural Born Citizen Act, they are exercising the right of Congress to define the terms within the Constitution. Staffers who worked on the bill point out that Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution grants authority to Congress to "establish a uniform rule of naturalization." They say it is better to address the issue now and bring clarification rather than wait for a court challenge that could potentially be divisive and politicized.

Specifically, the bill would grant natural born citizen status to three groups of individuals:

- "Any person born in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof."

- "Any person born outside the United States who derives citizenship at birth from a United States citizen parent or parents pursuant to an Act of Congress."

- "Any person born outside the United States who is adopted by 18 years of age

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by a United States citizen parent or parents who are otherwise eligible to transmit citizenship to a biological child pursuant to an Act of Congress."

Having introduced the bill into the Senate, the senators are now working on getting a companion version of the bill introduced into the House of Representatives. It is too early to determine prospect for passage but the Senators are hopeful the bill will meet with little resistance or controversy.

While the bill may only affect the tiniest percentage, if any percentage, of foreign adopted children, those who helped draft the bill say the greatest

value of the bill to adoptive parents is the establishment of yet another legal building block guaranteeing that adopted children are viewed the same and have the same rights as biologically born children. To that end, the "Natural Born Citizen Act" seeks to remove one of the

last remaining obstacles to complete equality of treatment in the eyes of the law.

Nickles perhaps summarized best the effect the bill could have on foreign adopted children, "These children could grow up to be America's next great writers, actors, lawyers or doctors. They could be ministers or mill workers, farmers or senators. They should also be allowed to grow up to be president."

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