

## **Why a Step-Parent Adoption Order is Needed in Addition to a Birth Certificate:**

- A birth certificate is a document issued through an administrative process and is not a court order.
- A birth certificate is based on the relationship between spouses only and not the relationship between parent and child.
- Parentage solely dependent on a birth certificate can be challenged in a divorce—and there are several cases out there where that has happened.
- Parentage based solely on a birth certificate might not be recognized by all judges/courts/statutes.
- The birth certificate administrative process does not ensure that sperm donor or other possible parent rights are terminated by court order.
- Parentage based solely on a birth certificate may not be sufficient to adequately give a basis for passing an inheritance by interstate laws, for the child to qualify for social security benefits and for claiming the child as a dependent under pertinent tax codes.