



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2024: Unceded Algonquin Territory in Ottawa

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP VOTE FOR A NEW PROCESS TO END CANADA'S DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN**

Last week on Treaty 7 Territory, First Nations from across the country voted to ensure all First Nations children are forever protected from Canada's discrimination in child and family services and set forward a plan to do so.

Nearly nine years ago, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) confirmed what many had known for decades: Canada's delivery of child and family services to First Nations children and families was and continues to be racially discriminatory. Significant gains have been made thanks to enforceable legal orders from the Tribunal, and services are starting to get out to children and families to address the multi-generational harms from residential schools that make First Nations children nearly 20 times more likely to be placed outside their families.

However, the Federal Government has been backsliding, and the draft agreement put to the First Nations-in-Assembly last week did not provide sufficient protections for all First Nations children now and in the future. While the draft agreement broadcast a \$47.8B 10-year funding plan, closer scrutiny showed that the draft agreement would expire in nine years, those funds were not secure, and that First Nations Leadership and experts would be left out of future decision-making and implementation. There was no protection in the draft agreement for children from Canada's discrimination after year 10. Generations of First Nations children would once again be at risk of losing their childhoods and their lives to Canada's discrimination.

First Nations children, families, their Nations, and Canadians cannot afford to see further generations of First Nations children suffer when we know better and can do better. The discrimination must stop. With the guidance of Elders, First Nations Leadership, youth in and from care, and dedicated experts working on the front lines – we will get there.

There were different views at last week's meeting. This reflects the distinct realities that First Nations children experience. Moving forward in an inclusive, transparent, and evidence-based way will lead to better results for children and, in the end, a better society for all of us. The important work done by the Assembly of First Nations, Chiefs of Ontario, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation will inform the path forward. The Federal Government needs to improve on the Tribunal's current orders and be ready to accept First Nations evidence-informed solutions that First Nations approve. The Caring Society will do its part. We call on the Federal Government to come to the table in keeping with the Honour of the Crown and in line with the path forward directed by the First Nations-in-Assembly.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

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