



Manitoba
Keewatinowis
Okimakanak Inc.

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Government of Manitoba's passing of Bill 34 a major setback for reconciliation

Treaty One Territory and Homeland of the Métis Nation - Winnipeg, MB... Recently, the Government of Manitoba introduced *Bill 34: The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*.

Indigenous leaders in the province are coming together to express their urgent concerns and collective disagreement with section 8 of Bill 34, which sets out to legally end the ability of current and former children in care to sue the Manitoba government for clawing back their monthly **Children's Special Allowance (CSA)**.

The monthly CSA allowance is equal to the maximum **Canada Child Benefit** payment plus the **Child Disability Benefit**. It is estimated that to date, the Province of Manitoba has illegitimately taken \$250 million from Indigenous children in care. They have moved these funds from the Government of Canada into their general revenue stream for years.

There are currently two legal actions in the courts in response to the Government of Manitoba's actions to recall the CSA and pocket the money for themselves. If Bill 34 is passed, it will end both of these legal actions.

"The introduction of section 8 in Bill 34 today, not only ends the two legal actions in court, but also ends the Manitoba government's ability to be held accountable for its actions in the future," states **Southern Chiefs' Organization ("SCO") Grand Chief Jerry Daniels**.

The CSA was originally used as a trust fund for Indigenous children in the care of Indigenous child and family services (CFS) authorities. Under Premier Greg Selinger's NDP government, due to the poor financial state of the CFS system, the CSA was repurposed and used as a revenue source for the Government of Manitoba.

"When Selinger clawed this money back from the Indigenous authorities, the PCs ridiculed the NDP," recalls **Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) President David Chartrand**. "Now, instead of righting this injustice and advancing reconciliation, the Premier is opting to run away from his responsibilities and steal the rights of the Metis children of today and those yet to be born."

“In Manitoba, children in care have been aging out without any resources set aside to help them with their future. Some children aging out have been left at homeless shelters with nothing to their name. MKO is imploring the Government of Manitoba to act in good faith to reconciliation and return the \$250 million to the Indigenous authorities to create trust funds for children in care,” shares **Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “This money belongs to the children who are currently in care and those who have aged out. The province has no right to keep these funds and must work with Indigenous organizations and communities to ensure they are respecting the rights of our children.”

The MMF, MKO, and SCO have co-authored a letter to Manitoba’s Minister of Families, Heather Stefanson, to remove the offending provisions. There has yet to be a response.

All three leaders will be holding a joint virtual press conference tomorrow morning, April 14, 2020 at 10:00 am. Details of how to connect will be sent out by 9:00 am tomorrow.

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