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SCO CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE UPGRADE TO VITAL STATISTICS SOFTWARE

Names of Indigenous Children Being Denied– Grand Chief Daniels

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is calling on the Manitoba government to prioritize an immediate upgrade to how it records birthnames.

“Imagine, being at the hospital following the birth of your child, and not being able to register that little one’s chosen name,” said SCO Grand Jerry Daniels. “That’s the reality facing one of my citizens right now, and likely countless other First Nation families throughout this province.”

Recently, Carson Robinson and his partner Zaagaate Jock celebrated the birth of their first child in a Manitoba hospital. They had chosen for their daughter a beautiful traditional Mohawk name which includes a colon symbol. When they went to complete her birth registry, they were told her name could not be entered into the system.

Section 3 of the Vital Statistics Act, states the given name and the surname of a child must consist only of the letters "a" to "z" and accents from the English or French languages, and may include hyphens and apostrophes. The issue is linked to outdated software that is being used to register birthnames.

“From where I sit, this is not an appropriate excuse when parents are being denied the right to register the name of their child,” added Grand Chief Daniels. “We are literally talking about a common symbol on any computer keyboard and so we are asking our provincial Treaty partner to rectify this situation immediately.”

The Path to Reconciliation Act clearly states that the province must take immediate and long-term actions that are responsive to the priorities and needs of Indigenous Nations and Indigenous peoples.

“I can’t think of a better opportunity for Premier to put these words into action,” concluded Grand Chief Daniels. “To further delay this change, only serves to detract from the spirit of true reconciliation.”

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 81,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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