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SCO CALLS ON MANITOBA GOVERNMENT TO PASS BILL 241 AS LAW

The Drivers Vehicle Amendment Act Indicates Manitoba's Commitment to Honour MMIWG2S+ Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 3, 2022

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is calling on the Province of Manitoba to bring Bill 241, the Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, back to the floor of the legislature and to pass it as law to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S) and support families that have lost loved ones.

Bill 241 would amend legislation to create a licence plate with the acronym MMIWG2S showing a red hand or red dress to honour families of stolen sisters. The licence plate would be available for purchase, similar to other specialty plates, with \$30 from each sale designated to a charity for families affected by this national tragedy.

"Bill 241 and the MMIWG2S license plate in Manitoba may not get to the floor at the legislature today," said Chief Henderson of Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation. "In the spirit of reconciliation, I ask that the Manitoba government bring this bill back onto the floor, and pass it as law to show leadership and solidarity with the families of MMIWG2S+."

Of all First Nations in Manitoba, Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation has the highest number of missing and murdered First Nation women and girls. With the legislative session ending today, the Chiefs of the southern First Nations say it is urgent that the bill be passed as law.

"I want to send my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost loved ones to this national epidemic of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples," stated SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "SCO will continue to move forward, to end persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations, and we are hoping it is with the support of our provincial Treaty partner."

In September, SCO launched a Survivors Healing Supports Program to support the Survivors of MMIWG2s+ and last month, following the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ people, the SCO Chiefs-in-Summit passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a dedicated SCO MMIWG2s+ unit.

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Families who require immediate support can call the national, independent toll free 24/7 support line at 1-844-413-6649 to speak to a counsellor. The service is available in English, Anishnaabemowin (Ojibway), Cree, Inuktitut, and French.

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 81,500 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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