

# BC ABORIGINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL



Statement for Immediate release  
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## **STATEMENT FROM THE BC ABORIGINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL ON BILL 26 (2018) *CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AMENDMENT ACT***

Coast Salish Territories/Vancouver, BC – Bill 26 (2018) – *Child, Family and Community Services Amendment Act* (CFCSA) was introduced in the BC legislature on April 24, 2018. While the BC Aboriginal Justice Council (BCAJC) is encouraged by some of the proposed changes in Bill-26, the amendments do not signal commitment to the transformative change both the Province and Indigenous leaders have acknowledged is necessary to reduce the disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth in care and to eliminate the systemic injustice within the child welfare system.

The BCAJC is concerned that the proposed amendments to the CFCSA were developed unilaterally, with limited opportunities for Indigenous comments, rather than meaningful active involvement of Indigenous Nations in authoring the legislation.

Nancy Sandy, Co-Chair of the BC Aboriginal Justice Council, said “That is unacceptable in light of the need to reconcile past historical injustices in Indigenous child welfare and the Sixties Scoop.”

Sandy continued, “The BC Aboriginal Justice Council hears directly from those who work with and for our Indigenous children and youth in care that they feel marginalized when it comes to legislative and policy changes. While there are some positive changes included in the proposed amendments to the legislation, significant work will need to be undertaken following any legislative amendment process to ensure that policy and practice standards and the required resourcing supports are in place to implement any changes or agreements with Indigenous Nations.”

The BCAJC recognizes the policy and practice standards, capacity and resourcing have all contributed to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care. This is a topic that has been documented in reports on Indigenous child welfare, including the Report of Grand Chief Ed John to the BC Minister of Child and Family Development (MCFD) in 2016.

“The BC Aboriginal Justice Council is calling for a more extensive review of existing legislation, policy and practice to ensure the amendments are in line with the Premier’s commitment to

fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and MCFD's commitment to implementation of the recommendations in the Ed John Report," Sandy said.

Doug White, Co-Chair of the BC Aboriginal Justice Council, said, "Our Nations in BC are determined to see transformative changes to the child welfare system. Our Nations and leaders are ready and willing to do the difficult work to improve the outcomes for our children. We need the Province to be our partner, but we also need a roadmap, including legislative changes, that anticipate as an end goal Indigenous jurisdiction over Indigenous child welfare. Bill C 26 does not go near far enough."

The BCAJC is respectfully requesting that the Provincial government at a minimum acknowledge the limits of Bill-26 by committing immediately to plan for a robust committee review on the Bill that is inclusive of meaningful engagement with Indigenous leadership and Indigenous child safety experts. Through engagement, further substantive amendments to legislation can be explored alongside the vision and leadership of Indigenous communities and service providers. In this way, work can also be undertaken to plan for the downstream changes required to policy and practice standards.

For further information, please contact:

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