



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 20, 2019

Bill C-92 and the Battle of Provincial and Federal Jurisdiction over First Nations Child Welfare

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) are not surprised provincial governments are challenging the implication of the federal government's Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, Métis children, youth and families*. As the battle begins with the provinces against the federal government about who has jurisdiction over Child Welfare, First Nations should still continue to pursue their own jurisdiction without the approval of governments.

While various First Nations are in the midst of developing their own laws surrounding Child Welfare, Provincial governments are challenging Bill C-92, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families*, claiming that constitutionally, the Federal government does not have jurisdiction in matter of social services within each province.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "Governments are fighting and challenging who has jurisdiction over First Nations children. They seem to forget that First Nations jurisdiction does not come from any government officials. We as First Nations, have an inherent right to care for our children. Long before settlers came to this land, we had our own structures and our ways for caring for our children, but this right was taken from us because of the government's perceived understanding that they knew what was best for us."

As of January 1, 2020, Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, will be proclaimed. First Nations are beginning this process and are able to enter into coordination agreement through tripartite tables with the federal and provincial governments. However in Manitoba, First Nations are pursuing a different avenue to First Nations jurisdiction over children and families. The *Bringing Our Children Home Act (BOCHA)*, is unique to First Nations in Manitoba as it was developed by First Nations citizens, youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and leadership. Furthermore it represents a nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

"Our sovereignty doesn't come from a foreign system," continued Grand Chief Dumas. "It comes from our people who are the ones that will make the determination on how they want to move forward. The provincial and federal governments can argue among one another, while we work to improve our livelihood, to ensure the well-being of our children is a priority. There are many First Nations who are paving the way in their communities with innovative ideas and actions to care for their children, ensuring they stay within their family unit, on their lands, and within their Nations. This is happening without any government approval or intervention."



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS



ANISHINAWAG BIGHIWEWAG

First Nations

Family Advocate Office

"Bringing Our Children Home"

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 per cent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate