



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2020

AMC concerned about Bill 34 that attempts to legitimize the Province of Manitoba's theft of over \$300 million dollars stolen from First Nations children

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is seriously concerned with the impacts of Bill 34 – *The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*, which was introduced on March 19th, 2020. Bill 34 is an omnibus which justifies the practice of clawing back funding for First Nations children in care by the Government of Manitoba and immunizes the province from legal actions in this regard.

The Children's Special Allowances (CSA) is a monthly payment by the federal government to the province of Manitoba or private child welfare agencies for maintaining children in care. The CSA is to be used by agencies to support the care of First Nations children through education, training and recreational activities.

Since 2005, Manitoba has required child welfare agencies to remit the CSA amount they receive from the federal government back to the province. As a result, the most vulnerable children in society have not received the necessary funding to ensure their social inclusion. The amount of theft through this practice by the Government from First Nations children far exceeds \$300 million dollars.

In 2018, a legal proceeding was commenced against the Province of Manitoba relating to the CSA claw backs. When the Conservative government was in opposition, they called the practice of CSA clawbacks illegal and immoral. Now, they have introduced Bill 34 which deems the clawbacks which occurred from January 1, 2005 to March 31, 2019 as lawful. It also prevents legal actions against the clawbacks during this period, effectively rendering the existing lawsuit meaningless.

Manitoba has the highest rates of child poverty in Canada and the highest rate of First Nations children in the child welfare system. The First Nations leadership of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs have repeatedly called on the Manitoba government to cease the practice of taking monies away from First Nations children.

"The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs have repeatedly called on the Manitoba government to cease the practice and now the introduction of Bill 34 clearly demonstrates that our collective voice has been ignored. The Province of Manitoba has built an industry and economy from the apprehension of First Nations children. There has been over 150 years of stolen children and the treatment of First Nations children has never improved. Bill 34 is a clear example of how government views reconciliation in this province, particularly when it comes to our First Nation children in care." AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas concluded.



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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 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.