Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

Abinoojiyag Bigiiwewag
First Nations Family Advocate Office
"Bringing Our Children Home"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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"AMC responds to the Manitoba Government's deceitful tactics with Bill 34: *The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*"

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) are seriously concerned about Manitoba fast tracking Bill 34, *The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act.* If passed the Bill will have serious implications on First Nations children in care.

"From 2005 to 2019, approximately $338 million dollars of the Child Special Allowance (CSA) funds meant for First Nations children in care were stolen by the provincial government. This is an illegal action. We have a government trying to justify their actions, wiping their hands clean from the claw backs of the CSA by protecting themselves from any legal recourse through Bill 34," stated Chief Karen Batson of Pine Creek First Nation.

On March 19, 2020 the Manitoba government introduced Bill 34. The Bill is currently seeking to legalize Manitoba's actions of recovering the Child Special Allowance since January 1, 2005, when they started taking the child tax credit away. In 2018, a class action lawsuit was filed on behalf of the off-reserve children who had their CSA's clawed back. A trial date is set for this September. But if Bill 34 passes by September the Manitoba government would not be held responsible for their actions and the lawsuit would be invalid.

"What greatly disturbs me about this bill is its secrecy," said Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. "The CSA amendment was hidden in a giant omnibus bill attached to a budget that was introduced shortly before Covid-19 disrupted the legislature. No one knew the serious implications of this bill until last week. These actions are extremely damaging to our most vulnerable people, our children".

"This is a human rights violation and is another example of how the provincial government has neglected children in care in the past, present, and now future," concluded Chief Batson.

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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), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.