



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AMC condemns Bill 34 *Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*; and its measures to deny justice for off-reserve First Nations children in care**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is calling out the government of Manitoba’s sneaky tactics, and its illegal and immoral actions of including, within an omnibus budget bill, special protection that prevents legal challenges to the siphoning of Children’s Special Allowance (CSA) dollars away from First Nations children who entered the provincial child welfare system.

On October 7, 2020 the government of Manitoba will begin the new session of the Legislature with a Speech from the Throne. As part of the legislative agenda, Manitoba will be introducing Bill 34: the *Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*. Bill 34 will be introduced as an omnibus Bill which limits the opportunity to debate and will bypass legislative process for discussions and for people to prepare position statements on the Bill.

“Bill 34 effectively robs First Nations children and youth of their access to justice; the way the Manitoba Government tacked these measures onto a budget amendment was done in a manner which grants themselves immunity to criticism and opposition that would otherwise be heard during the typical stages of introducing a public bill,” stated AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

Since the beginning of 2005 up until 2019, the Manitoba government has stolen approximately \$338 MILLION DOLLARS of funding from the federal government’s Children’s Special Allowance. The Children’s Special Allowance is federal funding that is exclusively for the purpose of the care, maintenance, education, training or advancement of children in care. (*Section 3(2) of the Children’s Special Allowance Act, SC 1992, c 48*)

Currently, there is a Class Action Lawsuit against Manitoba that will potentially provide compensation for children who didn’t benefit from their CSA. But if Bill 34 passes, Manitoba will be granted immunity from its actions and families will not have access to justice or compensation.

“In addition to Manitoba actions, they have been using the CSA as general revenue. Manitoba continues to treat the most vulnerable people in society as commodities. Instead of ensuring the well-being of our children, they are profiting off their misery. They are infringing on our families human rights by stripping First Nations children from their ability to seek legal action for the challenges endured while being in care without much needed support,” concluded AMC Grand Chief Dumas.

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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.