



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMC denounces Manitoba's plan to incentivise guardianship of First Nations children

TREATY ONE TERRITORY, MB _ The Manitoba government today announced plans to introduce legislation that would make it difficult for First Nations families to get their children back once they go into care.

Currently, there are financial supports in place for foster parents but once they become guardians, those supports are no longer available. The proposed plan would enable foster parents to become guardians of children in their care while continuing financial support.

AMC **Grand Chief Arlen Dumas** said "The **Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs** strongly denounces this proposed plan by the Pallister government.

"Making foster parents into guardians will make it almost impossible for children to return to their own families."

The AMC and the First Nations it advocates for have repeatedly stated the current Child and Family Services system incentivizes apprehension. The current system is punitive in nature towards First Nations parents. The **AMC First Nations Family Advocate Office** knows of numerous instances where First Nation parents have been fighting for years to regain custody of their children — many of whom are permanent CFS wards. But the parents have not given up their fight, and families have not given up their fight.

"As it stands now, foster families have more rights than birth parents do. Our children are growing up in mainly non-Indigenous homes, with no cultural supports. If you want to provide foster parents with the financial supports as they seek permanent guardianship, make sure you have done everything in your power to first place Indigenous children with their kin and in their First Nations communities before you sell them permanently into the CFS system," said **Cora Morgan**, the AMC First Nations Family Advocate.

It's the government's responsibility to support our most vulnerable and marginalized not turn them into a reimbursement strategy with the use of social impact bonds.

“Pay for Performance’ and ‘Return on Investment’ are phrases that should never be used in reference to solutions for the CFS crisis in Manitoba,” said Dumas.

In the Throne Speech, Lt.-Gov. Janice Filmon stated the province wants to strengthen reconciliation in this province, however, Morgan points out the AMC has never been consulted about the province's proposed child welfare reforms.

In June 2014, the Assembly released 10 recommendations entitled ***Bringing Our Children Home***. The recommendations span from re-unification and strengthening of families to adapting housing policies that meet family re-unification needs first and to keep children in the community. This report is available on our website at **manitobachiefs.com**.

Grand Chief Dumas concluded “If you want to do what's best for our children then you have to work with us. We know what our children need, we don't need to be told what is best for us anymore.”

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 (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota people and traditions.

About the First Nations Family Advocate Office

The First Nations Family Advocate Office provides support and advocacy to Indigenous families that are involved with the Child and Family Services system.

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