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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2020

Joint Statement From The Assembly Of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba NDP Caucus and Manitoba Liberals Regarding Bill 34

Treaty 1 Territory, Manitoba - The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), in solidarity with the Official Opposition Manitoba NDP and the Manitoba Liberal Party, denounce and reject Bill 34 and stand in opposition against the Provincial government's approach to denying First Nations families and children access to justice. Section 84 of the *Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act* will retroactively legalize Manitoba's actions since January 1, 2005, as well as take away the right to any reparations for the children and families affected by the practice of clawing back the Children's Special Allowance.

"As a united voice, we stand to denounce and bring awareness to the Pallister government's underhanded and immoral tactics of including special measures buried within an omnibus bill that give the Provincial government protection and immunity over their illegal actions of stealing the Children's Special Allowance. In a time of reconciliation and formal apologies for past injustices that all levels of government have inflicted on First Nations, it is especially concerning to First Nations in Manitoba that this government would continue to attempt to trample on the rights of First Nations children and families through section 84 of this bill. Although the legislative assembly rules will likely allow for this type of legislation to become law, First Nations will continue to work with the Liberal and NDP MLAs to hold the Pallister government accountable and ensure that First Nations are no longer subject to the systemic racism and injustices that mechanisms such as Bill 34 inflict on the most vulnerable members of society," stated AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

Leader of the Official Opposition Wab Kinew stated: "First Nations children and families deserve their day in court. The Pallister government's attempt to protect themselves from being accountable to First Nations children is shameful. They have used this pandemic as cover to push through harmful legislation such as this, and many other bills, in an attempt to avoid accountability in the House and in court. We will do everything in our power to fight this bill and speak up for some of the most vulnerable people in Manitoba."

A class action lawsuit in the amount of \$338 million dollars was filed against the Provincial government on behalf of First Nation children in care who are victims of the government's actions of capturing the Children's Special Allowance. If Bill 34 passes, the class action lawsuit will be void and First Nation families and children will not receive compensation for the injustice they went through.

"As leaders we must always do right amongst the people we serve. To take away and deny people their

rights is a violation of their rights and it is discrimination against one of the most vulnerable people of society, First Nations children and youth. It is disgraceful to have a government in power take such a negative and immoral stance on this pressing issue, instead of handling it in a legitimate matter,” stated Liberal Leader Dougald Lamont.

As further political action in opposition to Bill 34, starting at 12:00 p.m. today, AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas will start off a 24-hour fast relay until a decision is made regarding section 84 of Bill 34.

For more information, please contact:

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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 / Inineew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.