



September 20, 2018

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Indigenous Services
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
North Tower, 10 Wellington Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0H4

Dear Minister Philpott,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Youth in Care Canada (YICC), we are writing you to address the anticipated National Indigenous Child Welfare Legislation (the Legislation). YICC is a national charitable organization which is led by and exists to voice the opinions and concerns of youth in and from care. We are excited the Federal Government is taking a positive step towards addressing the unconscionable disparities in child welfare for Indigenous youth. Given the historic links between child welfare, the residential school system, and the systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples, we encourage the federal government to use this opportunity to create legislation that will counteract past wrongs and position Canada on the right side of history.

We at YICC strongly believe the voices of Indigenous youth in and from care must be heard and accounted for in the development of the Legislation. Provincial-level legislative reviews of child welfare systems have benefitted greatly from the input of Indigenous youth in and from care. But most importantly, the Legislation your department is responsible for will affect our lives and our futures. Indigenous youth in and from care must be engaged in the development and implementation of the Legislation and associated programs, policies, and regulations that will effectively influence us.

We recognize that the Federal government is operating on a limited timeline given the impending election but believe adequate Consultation with Indigenous peoples cannot be disregarded. Given the potential for a change in government post-election, we strongly urge your department to consider taking a two-phased approach to the Legislation: first, pre-election legislation which sets out general principles for equitable, culturally-based funding and goes beyond provincial delegation to enable Indigenous models of jurisdiction, and second, comprehensive post-election legislative work which would design and implement such a system through in-depth Consultation, co-development, and leadership of Indigenous peoples and youth in and from care. Furthermore, it is critical both these pieces take a distinctions-based approach and be sensitive to the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis nations, tribal councils, communities, and youth in and from care.



YICC would be happy to continue this conversation with you and your department and expects to engage in the legislative process as soon as the draft of the Legislation is released. If you are interested in further discussing the Legislation with us, you can contact Ashley Bach, Director for British Columbia, at ashley@youthincare.ca.

Sincerely,

On Behalf of the Board of Directors of Youth in Care Canada:

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