

BCMF Commends Landmark Supreme Court Indigenous Child Welfare Opinion

MEDIA RELEASE

Vancouver, British Columbia, February 15, 2024 — BC Métis Federation (BCMF) joins other Indigenous organizations in lauding the Supreme Court’s affirmation that the welfare of Indigenous children should be in Indigenous hands.

In the unanimous decision rendered last week, the Supreme Court found that Bill C-92 is “constitutionally valid,” despite opposition from the Quebec government. Bill C-92, “An Act Respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children Youth and Families,” became law in 2019 and affirms that Indigenous communities have jurisdiction over child and family services. Delays caused by Quebec’s court challenge created years of uncertainty and confusion in the already fraught and sensitive environment.

“The rights of Indigenous children should never be up for debate,” said Keith Henry, BCMF President. “It’s unconscionable – and now it has been deemed unconstitutional – for any federal or provincial government to attempt to strip away the rights of Indigenous communities, including the Métis people, to protect the welfare of our children and youth. There continues to be no progress to advance Métis jurisdiction of Métis child and family services in British Columbia and we will continue to demand change.”

Even though British Columbia was the first province to pass legislation implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), progress toward any tangible implementation has been slow. UNDRIP recognizes “the right of Indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child.” Yet, despite the generations of Indigenous children and youth that have suffered from colonial interventions, the harm continues in the province: as of March 2022, Indigenous children made up 68 percent of youth in care, yet make up only [ten percent of the total population of children](#).

The British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development’s funding models and approaches do not align with its public commitments to reconciliation. BCMF is calling upon the government of British Columbia to put its reconciliation rhetoric into action by enacting practical steps to address this continued colonial harm.

About BCMF

The BC Métis Federation (BCMF) is a non-profit association that works with Métis communities to ensure the well being of BCMF members. Through grassroots efforts, BCMF advocates on behalf of its many members, living all across the province.

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