

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

JUNE 24, 2019

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL WELCOMES THE PASSAGE OF RIGHTS AFFIRMING INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATION



BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver: The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is pleased with the passage of Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* which received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, National Indigenous Peoples Day. This legislation affirms the inherent jurisdiction over children and families held by First Nations and is a critical step in addressing the humanitarian crisis that exists surrounding Indigenous child welfare.

"First Nations in British Columbia welcome the passage of Bill C-92 today. As First Nations people, we have never given up jurisdiction over our children and we are grateful to see this finally recognized and affirmed. Our children, our families, and our communities have been devastated by the impacts of the child welfare system and this legislation is key to undoing that harm by finally creating the space for us as First Nations people to deliver these services through our own legal systems, grounded in our values and cultures", said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit.

"This is an important piece of legislation for First Nations children and families, who have had to suffer for too long as a result of the imposition of colonial laws and systems created specifically to assimilate our people. First Nations in B.C have been fighting for this for a long time and we are ready to move forward," stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the UBCIC. "First Nations continue to define what their existing governance and jurisdiction is, not the government. First Nations will define how they engage government in coordination agreements. There were substantive revisions in the Bill to respect these rights."

"We are pleased to see this important legislation receive Royal Assent, especially on Indigenous Peoples day," stated Terry Teegee, British Columbia Regional Chief. "We thank those who have pushed hard and done the work so that we could see this achieved today. This is a true act of reconciliation, and we look forward to working with our partners to see this fully realized for First Nations children and families in British Columbia"

The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).



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