

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

October 31st, 2014



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Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1
Via facsimile: (250) 387-1715

Honourable Suzanne Anton
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
PO Box 9044, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2
Via facsimile: (250) 387-6411

OPEN LETTER: Support for Native Courtworkers' Strike Action

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Anton:

We are writing to express our full support for the employees of the Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association of British Columbia (NCCABC) in their current strike action. We call on the Province to address the current wage disparity that exists and ensure Native Courtworkers receive fair and equitable wages in line with the critical services they provide.

It is our understanding that the primary issue in the strike action is wage parity and funding shortfall. Both the NCCABC employees and the organization itself are in agreement that this unique situation has arisen as a direct result of the ongoing underfunding from the provincial government. As you are aware, the Courtworkers are paid approximately \$10,000 per year behind similar classification under the Community Services Labor Relations Act, and also below other Aboriginal workers who are covered by the Aboriginal Services collective agreement which covers Aboriginal workers across the province. That Native Courtworker wages are substantially less than their colleagues is extremely concerning.

As you know, Aboriginal people in Canada are over represented in the criminal justice system. This is in large part due to a legacy of historic injustice resulting in ongoing inequality. For over forty years the NCCABC and the Courtworkers throughout BC have worked to ensure aboriginal people are able to navigate the justice system in a fair, just, equitable, and culturally appropriate way, thus contributing to more positive realities for aboriginal citizens. Providing the necessary level of funding for a robust program as well as competitive wages, or at a minimum comparable wages, ensures the NCCABC will be able to maintain stable and committed staff and therefore fulfill its important mandate. It is essential that the Province provide equitable funding so that the Courtworkers can receive fair compensation, and can return to full service provision throughout the province.

Yours truly,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

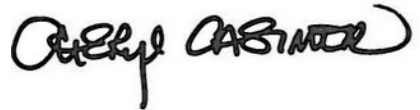
On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:



Grand Chief Edward John



Robert Phillips



Cheryl Casimer

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS:



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Bob Chamberlin



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould

CC: Stephanie Smith, President, BCGEU
Community Social Service Employers Association
Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association of British Columbia