



Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

To Protect, Promote, Bring to Life, Implement, and Sustain the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8 as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the waters flow.

HEAD OFFICE

Mikisew Cree First Nation
Box 90
Fort Chipewyan, Alberta T0P 1B0
Telephone: (780) 697-3740
Fax: (780) 697-3826

SUB OFFICE

c/o Santa Fe Plaza
18178 – 102 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1S7
Telephone: (780) 444-9366
Fax: (780) 484-1465

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Alberta Harvests Organs Off Dead Children In Care

Edmonton, Alberta – May 4, 2015 – In a shocking and macabre twist, Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta has learned that the Ministry of Human Services had passed a policy that children in care can have their organs donated at death.

“Having just learned of this policy, I am horrified, appalled and, quite frankly, mad as hell that this is happening and that it has been working quietly in the background for so long,” states Chief Steve Courtoreille, Grand Chief with Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

The policy, originally created in 2006, applied to children in care under the status of Permanent Guardianship Order (PGO). In September of that year, the Statutory Director of Alberta Child & Family Services, now the Ministry of Human Services, met with all 18 Delegated First Nations Agencies and 12 CEO’s of Child & Family Authorities to announce that organ donation was a policy in the Child & Family Services policy handbook that they were to follow immediately. In 2014 the Organ Donation policy was extended to also include children in care under Temporary Guardianship Orders (TGO).

“We have children in care that are dying, and now, we find out that they may be harvesting their organs? It is disgusting, they are dying under provincial care, in a provincial system. Last year, we had 20 Aboriginal children die in care, does this policy means all these kids had their organs removed. What is going on in this province?” states Chief Courtoreille.

The children that Chief Courtoreille is referring to were under the care of the Statutory Director when they died.

“Part of our culture is that a body must be whole when it goes back to the Creator, not dissected as the Government sees fit. The problem is that we are not a part of these conversations, instead, the Province just did it. In the 8 years this policy has been in place how many of our children have been sent back missing parts? Honestly, if people aren’t shocked by this, then they just aren’t listening,” states Chief Courtoreille.

“We are having an election right now and everything is about the economy and taxes, what about accountability to our children, social issues of children dying in care and missing women? What about preserving the dignity of our children after death, so they can be welcomed by the Creator

whole? The Alberta Government needs to stop this practice immediately and the Premier and Minister have a lot to answer for,” states the Grand Chief.

Contact:

Greg Posein

Communications Coordinator

gposein@treaty8.org

18178 – 102 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1S7

Ph: (780) 444-9366

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