NEWS RELEASE
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NAN Statement from AFN Special Chiefs Assembly

October 17, 2024

CALGARY, AB: On behalf of the leadership of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), the NAN Executive Council has issued the following statement following today's vote on the $47.8-billion Final Agreement on the long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program:

> "We have travelled a long way to get where we are, not just this week, but throughout this lengthy process. We have heard from many voices across Turtle Island that have vested interests in this Agreement. There are diverse and conflicting views. We are disappointed that the Final Agreement was not ratified today, but we respect the decision of First Nations-in-Assembly.
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> We are grateful for the tremendous work by our leadership and everyone who spent many years negotiating this Agreement. We acknowledge Dr. Cindy Blackstock and her team at the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society who launched this legal action nearly two decades ago. We commend her and thank her for her fearless advocacy. We also recognize Mishkeegogamang First Nation member Ashley Bach for having the courage to share her lived experience and provide a strong voice for young people in care as a representative plaintiff at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.
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> There is much apprehension for our communities now that the Final Agreement was not ratified at the national level. The issues addressed in this Agreement are long-standing and must be resolved. Our families must be able to access the supports they need, and our children must remain in their communities where they belong, with supports that acknowledge the unique remoteness challenges in NAN.
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> Leaders from across Ontario voiced their support and did their best for our children and families today, and we want to highlight the shameful way that the defeat of today's resolution was celebrated by those in the room – many being those in the child welfare agencies who will continue to benefit from the status quo. Instead of moving forward together in a strength-based approach, we saw the divisiveness that unfortunately just continues to cause harm to our children.
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> Our leadership has given us a strong mandate to reject the status quo and assert their authority to control the care and well-being of their children. It gives us comfort to know that the Creator has a plan, and we will not give up. We will regroup, strategize, and begin discussions with the appropriate federal and provincial officials on a new path forward."

NAN Chiefs ratified the Final Agreement during an Assembly on October 9. The Resolution directed the Executive Council to sign the Final Agreement and seek its approval at Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Chiefs from across Ontario voted in favour of ratification on October 10.

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