



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
February 9, 2024

MKO Applauds Supreme Court of Canada's Decision Declaring Indigenous Child Welfare Law Constitutional

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. Grand Chief Garrison Settee on behalf of the 26 communities we represent applauds the Supreme Court of Canada's decision declaring the federal Act for Indigenous child welfare is constitutional.

Today, in a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled the federal law, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, which came into effect in January 2020, is constitutional. The decision dismisses Quebec's legal challenge to the legislation, and it affirms Indigenous legislation is Paramount to laws of provincial and territorial governments.

The Quebec government had challenged the constitutionality of the federal Act, arguing that child and family services are under provincial jurisdiction and that Canada had overstepped its authority by introducing the legislation.

“The court's decision reaffirms the inherent right of First Nations to self-determination and to exercise jurisdiction over child welfare”, said Grand Chief Settee.

In Manitoba, 90% of the children in care are Indigenous. The federal Act provides a pathway for Indigenous Nations to develop and implement their own laws for child and family services and to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system.

The court's ruling marks an historic milestone in the process of reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous Nations. It sends a strong message that Canada is committed to supporting Indigenous Nations in exercising jurisdiction over child welfare.

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.