



Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
June 25, 2021

MKO Statement on Supportive Guardianship Program

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief Garrison Settee and the MKO Child Welfare Secretariat are issuing a statement in response to the announcement of the Supportive Guardianship Program made by Manitoba Families Minister Rochelle Squires.

MKO Grand Chief Settee declared, “I am concerned with last week’s announcement by Minister Rochelle Squires. This is unacceptable considering all that has transpired with the residential school system. The same policy that has devastated our First Nation communities nationwide through the sixties scoop and the residential schools continues today with the supported guardianship program.”

Grand Chief Settee questioned the intent of the provincial government in launching the Supportive Guardianship Program as it will continue the segregation of our First Nation children through their new policy directive.

“I am outraged at this provincial government’s continued practice of making unilateral decisions on behalf of our MKO First Nations leadership,” shared Grand Chief Settee. “Our Chiefs continue to advocate for the reduction of the number of children in care, however, our involvement as leadership should be a requirement to ensure that our children are not being adopted without the consent of their families and communities.”

In last week’s announcement, the provincial government introduced a program to encourage family guardianship of children in care, under the guise of the General CFS Authority. Minister Squires stated that the Supportive Guardianship Program will “provide stability to ensure better outcomes and protection for children.”

“It is the viewpoint of MKO that the General CFS Authority will uphold the dictation of policy effecting Indigenous children in care without consultation from the Leadership Council. The provincial government is giving the General Authority the red light to bypass their adoption act through this guardianship process. This means they do not have to notify First Nation leaderships about their members being adopted out. This practice is unacceptable to our First Nations,” said Grand Chief Settee.

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