



## BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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**BCAFN 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**  
**The Sheraton Wall Centre– Vancouver, BC**  
**June 24-25, 2015**

**Resolution 03/2015**

**SUBJECT: RECONCILIATION AND COMPENSATION FOR FIRST NATIONS BOARDING HOME STUDENTS**

**MOVED BY: CHIEF RON IGNACE, SKEETCHSTN/SHUSWAP NATION**

**SECONDED BY: CHIEF JAMES DELORME, KLAHOOSE FIRST NATION**

**DECISION: CARRIED BY CONSENSUS**

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. First Nations boarding home students were First Nations students who attended federally sponsored and operated schools during the 1950's through to the late 1970's. These First Nations students were sent away to attend school under the federal Boarding Home School Program, and were boarded in private homes in cities such as Terrace, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, and others;
- B. Former students of the Boarding Home School Program who boarded with non-Aboriginal families report having suffered terrific culture shock. With no guidance or counseling and no prior experiences with non-Aboriginal people, former boarding home students report suffering ridicule, embarrassment, and racism, both inside boarding homes and at the schools they attended;
- C. In 2006, Canada's *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement* was approved and implemented and provides Common Experience Payments to survivors of Indian residential schools. However, the claims of First Nations boarding home students were not addressed in this settlement agreement;
- D. Like Indian Residential School survivors and day scholars, First Nations boarding home students endured loss of culture, loss of language, and often emotional, spiritual, sexual, physical, and psychological abuse and other injuries while boarding home students. This severely affected these individuals and their experience continues to have devastating intergenerational effects on First Nations families and communities;

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E. The United Nations' *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:

**Article 8.1:** Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture

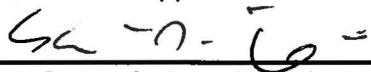
**Article 8.2:** States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:

- a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;
- b) Any action which has the aim of or the effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;
- c) Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;
- d) Any form of forced assimilation or integration; and
- e) Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them;

- F. Many First Nations in BC have members who were boarding home students and who do not qualify for automatic compensation under the *Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement*, including the Nisga'a Nation who has approximately 500 known Nisga'a members who were boarding home students;
- G. The Nisga'a Volunteer Working Group on the Nisga'a Boarding Home Program ("the Working Group"), headed by Mr. Reginald Percival has the support of the Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive. The Working Group have been meeting since the Fall of 2005 and are committed to obtaining redress for Nisga'a boarding home students, committing significant financial and human resources to date;
- H. Based on their efforts and communications with Nisga'a boarding home students and boarding home students from other First Nations in BC, the Working Group continues to urge that a comprehensive First Nations led strategy is required in BC and nationally to deal with the abuses and trauma suffered by First Nations citizens who were boarding home students; and,
- I. Should the Government of Canada continue to deny redress to First Nations boarding home students, the Working Group are interested in and have already begun undertaking preparations in order to launch a class action suit and the Working Group invite other affected First Nations to join their suit.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

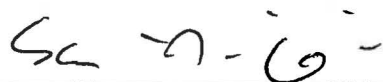
- 1. The Chiefs in Assembly direct the Regional Chief, working together with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, to explore options and develop a strategy for assisting First Nations citizens in BC to seek redress for abuses suffered by them as boarding home students;
- 2. The Chiefs in Assembly direct the BCAFN Regional Chief and BCAFN Board of Directors to provide moral, political, and other support as able to the Nisga'a Volunteer Working Group on the Nisga'a Boarding Home



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Program ("the Working Group"), in their efforts to seek redress for First Nations boarding home students, including possible pursuit of a class action suit; and,

3. The Chiefs in Assembly direct the Regional Chief to work with the AFN National Chief and members of the AFN Executive to engage the Government of Canada in development of a reconciliation and compensation package for First Nations boarding home students, and failing progress to work to support a class action suit on this matter.



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