



Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec–Labrador

250, Place Chef Michel Laveau, bureau 201
Wendake (Québec) GOA 4V0
Tél. : 418-842-5020 • Téléc. : 418-842-2660
www.apnql-afnql.com

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The Legault Government puts its own interests above those of First Nations children: It's a shame

Wendake, December 19, 2019 - To the detriment of First Nations children, François Legault's government prefers to raise a jurisdictional war rather than support First Nations governments that want to put an end to a child protection system, deficient for decades.

In the name of its jurisdiction, which it claims to be exclusive, the Legault government is challenging in court a federal law that confirms the authority and jurisdiction of First Nations over services to their children and families.

“I am extremely disappointed, but not surprised, by what I call the shameful decision of the Legault government,” said Ghislain Picard.

“Defending its so-called jurisdiction is one thing but doing it on the backs of our children is another. This is totally unacceptable. The Legault government is well aware that the current child welfare system does not work for First Nations children. Its own Viens Commission clearly reminded him of this recently. The provincial superiority complex persists and threatens to severely compromise services to our children and our families, as well as the relationship between the province and First Nations. This pride, this feeling of superiority of the province towards the First Nations has a name: colonialism. It is a real shame,” concludes Ghislain Picard.

The AFNQL rejects Quebec's arguments related to youth protection. Rather, it is the same narrow-mindedness manifested in another file, when the Attorney General of Quebec stated before the courts that “the Government of Quebec does not recognize the general right to autonomy of First Nations”. This time, however, it is First Nations children who are likely to pay the price.

“First Nations in Québec will continue to exercise their inherent right as well as their jurisdiction and autonomy in matters that concern them, including youth protection! The provincial system has failed us repeatedly and now, more than ever, our First Nations institutions need to implement a system that will take care of OUR children and families in a culturally-safe environment, regardless of where they live. Our constitutional rights must be respected and the role of both governments is to support us in achieving our Vision”, said Derek B. Montour, President of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services (FNQLHSSC).

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador is the political organization regrouping 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador. Follow us on Twitter @APNQL.

Source:

Alain Garon, agaron@apnql.com

Communications Advisor

Cell. : 418 254-4620