



## **MEDIA STATEMENT JANUARY 11, 2019**

### **Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth Supports First Nations Controlled Child Welfare System that Upholds the Inherent Rights of Indigenous Children**

SASKATOON– The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Corey O'Soup, is clarifying some comments made earlier this week in the media regarding First Nations readiness to take control of their own child welfare system. The Advocate unequivocally supports our First Nations reclaiming complete control of their own child welfare system and has complete confidence in the 17 First Nation Child and Family Services agencies across the province to take care of our First Nation Children.

"I believe that we as First Nations people have the education, knowledge, skills and abilities to love, care for, and teach our own children and youth, but most importantly I believe that we have the inherent right to be in complete control of our own child welfare system." said O'Soup

O'Soup has taken this stance publicly over the last two years and has been outspoken about this since his appointment as the Advocate for Children & Youth in 2016. O'Soup has spoken to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Chief Bobby Cameron to clarify and reiterate his position that his office supports them and their right to regain control of their own child welfare system.

"In my role as the Advocate for Children and Youth, it is my mandate and responsibility to ensure the safety of all children in Saskatchewan who are in care or receiving services under the provincial government. This is a responsibility that I take very seriously, and whether those children live on or off reserve, they deserve to have an independent voice speaking up for them as decisions are being made about them and their future. It is public knowledge that both systems struggle to find enough homes, families, and adoptive parents to take in and support our most vulnerable children, a majority of whom are First Nations. We have had far too many instances in the past of our most vulnerable children ending up in overcrowded foster homes, hotels and other unsafe situations, and ensuring that both systems are prepared and resourced to take on this crucial responsibility is my duty to all the children of Saskatchewan. I will continue to work in partnership and support our First Nation and provincial systems as they seek to find safe, loving and caring homes for all of our children." Said O'Soup

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. He leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, well-being and voice of children and youth are respected and valued.

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**For more information contact:**

Dan Harder  
Communication Coordinator  
Media Relations  
(306) 933-6700