



News Release

For Immediate Release
Sept. 22, 2016

REPRESENTATIVE REQUESTS B.C. ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ENABLE CULTURAL CONSIDERATION IN MÉTIS ADOPTION CASE

VICTORIA – Representative for Children and Youth Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond is calling on British Columbia’s Attorney General to intervene in the adoption case of a three-year-old Métis child known as “S.S.” to ensure that the girl’s cultural rights are properly considered in her placement.

The Representative, acting on advice from three leading Métis cultural experts, believes that the child’s Métis heritage has not been given substantial consideration in the case (L.M. and R.B. v. The Director of Child, Family and Community Services, 2016 BCCA 367). The Representative wrote Attorney General Suzanne Anton this week, asking that the child’s status with her B.C. foster parents be preserved until Anton can consider how the policies and laws of B.C. should be interpreted to give due consideration to the Indigenous expertise and guidance provided by experts Dr. Nicolas Vrooman, Dr. Maria Campbell and Dr. Paul L.A.H. Chartrand.

“I am asking for the Attorney General to show leadership on a matter that is crucial to Indigenous legal issues,” Turpel-Lafond said. “There is no existing practice framework or guideline for such matters and we need the Attorney General to help ensure that this child’s cultural rights are protected to the best standard possible. These experts, who approached my Office with their concerns, will be able to inform a proper process.”

S.S. has been the subject of a court dispute involving her Métis foster parents, who want to adopt her, and the non-Métis family in Ontario with whom her siblings reside. Courts in B.C. have twice ruled that the provincial Director of Child Welfare has the authority to move the child to Ontario, but the foster parents are appealing that decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has already removed the child from the B.C. foster parents’ home in preparation for the planned move to Ontario. But the Representative believes that the child’s status with her foster parents should be preserved for 30 days until cultural input by the Métis experts is received and duly considered.

A copy of the Representative’s letter is attached.

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