



Statement

Nov. 15, 2016

By Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
B.C. Representative for Children and Youth

I am pleased that the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth has today appointed an Acting Representative for Children and Youth, effective Nov. 27, 2016.

The role is a crucial one and I am delighted that Bernard Richard will step in to assume the responsibilities until such time as the Legislative Assembly is convened and Members of the Legislature can formalize his appointment in office as Representative according to the requirements of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

I had the privilege to work closely with Mr. Richard when he was Child Advocate in New Brunswick and was impressed with his knowledge, child-focus and capacity to be an independent advocate to effect change. He produced important work on child and youth mental health, youth justice and exposed the difficulties Aboriginal children and youth face when they seek support from the mainstream child welfare system.

I have congratulated Mr. Richard on the appointment and assured him that the staff at the Representative's Office have always provided a high degree of professionalism and support and are eager to do likewise for his tenure. I am confident there will be a smooth and effective transition without any significant loss of time or effort on investigations, monitoring or advocacy functions at the RCY.

It is essential that B.C. children, youth and their families continue to receive advocacy that is independent from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and that they be assured of utmost confidentiality and assistance in navigating the often complex and difficult assortment of services they require.