



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Representative makes submission as part of statutory review of *RCY Act*

Representative for Children and Youth Jennifer Charlesworth has made a number of recommendations to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth as part of her initial submission to the Committee's statutory review of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*.

The Committee is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the Act, which sets out the mandate for the Representative's Office. The *RCY Act* is reviewed every five years.

The Representative's submission represents her initial recommendations for amendments to the Act and identifies additional areas for consideration by the Committee. Charlesworth hopes that this submission will be helpful to the Committee and others in serving as a platform for the identification of key issues and considerations. RCY plans to make a second and final submission at the conclusion of the process.

Among the recommendations by Charlesworth are calls for the Committee to:

- Take a "whole child" approach to services for children and youth and accordingly expand the individual advocacy and systemic advocacy mandates of the Representative to include special education (or inclusion) services and supports to accommodate their needs in publicly funded educational services, and to address current gaps in jurisdiction over services for children with special needs that are administered by health authorities.

- Take a similar “whole person” approach with respect to the Representative’s individual and systemic advocacy jurisdiction over services to young adults who were formerly in care or eligible for Community Living BC services, so that the full range of service needs – such as mental health and addictions services, housing and specialized health care – can be addressed.
- Include reference in the *RCY Act* to international human rights treaties, specifically requiring the Representative to take into account the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)* in carrying out her functions in relation to children, youth and young adults. The governing statutes of comparable child and youth advocacy offices in Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Yukon and Nunavut all make reference to the *UNCRC*. Although it is the most universally accepted human rights instrument in the world, the *UNCRC* is not expressly referenced in any legislation pertaining to children in B.C.
- In addition to requiring the Representative to take into account *UNDRIP* in carrying out her functions under the Act, the Committee engage in a process of consultation with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples about means by which the Act can be strengthened to better reflect the experiences, needs and interests of those peoples and communities.
- In relation to the assertion of jurisdiction over child and family services by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, and the consequent loss of jurisdiction by the Representative, enable the Representative to enter into agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies exercising that jurisdiction to assist them in developing their own internal capacity to perform one or more of the Representative’s functions or for the Representative to directly perform one or more of her functions under the Act, at the request of the Indigenous Governing Body.

A consolidated summary of the Representative's recommendations is available [here](http://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/RCY-Legislation-Review-Recommendations.pdf):
<http://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/RCY-Legislation-Review-Recommendations.pdf>.

The Representative's full submission to the Committee is available [here](http://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/RCY-Legislation-Review-June28.pdf):
<http://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/RCY-Legislation-Review-June28.pdf>.

The Committee is currently accepting input for its review of the [RCY Act](#). You can share your views by making a submission through the Committee's [consultation portal](#) before 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

Media Contact:

Jenn Williams

Manager, Communications and Knowledge Mobilization

Phone: 250-356-7713

Email: jennifer.williams@rcybc.ca