



Submitted for: October 11th, 2018

## **Motion to Support the Rights of Canada's Most Vulnerable Children 2018-10-11**

**WHEREAS**, The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver has launched a petition to our Federal government to support Canada's Most Vulnerable Children;

**WHEREAS**, Children with an incarcerated parent, a parent with an addiction, or a homeless parent have significant adverse life experiences compared to their peers and lack specialized supports funded through the Government of Canada social transfers to Provinces;

**WHEREAS**, The Elizabeth Fry Society is looking for the SSMU to support the petition, by disseminating both the electronic, and paper versions through listserv, and having paper copies available for signing at the SSMU front desk (Appendix A)

**WHEREAS**, The paper and electronic petition are intended for the same purpose, however are slightly varied in weight, length, and language (Appendix B)

**WHEREAS**, There are specific rules, regulations, and guidelines as to whom, and how they may be signed (Appendix C);

**WHEREAS**, Students of McGill university will have an opportunity to advocate for vulnerable children, and drive strong social change at the Federal level;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU supports the petition, by disseminating both the electronic, and paper versions through listserv, and having paper copies available for signing at the SSMU front desk.

### **Moved By:**

Tre Mansdoerfer, President

Andrew Figueiredo, Arts Representative

Haoyi Qiu, Science Representative



Disclaimer: for any mistakes made in the gathering of signatures, there is absolutely no liability set upon the SSMU.

## Appendix A

### The Electronic and Paper Versions of the Petition

The Electronic Petition is as follows:

#### 1.1 PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Whereas:

- the Government of Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and has responsibilities for the care of children as outlined in the National Child Agenda and the Social Union Framework Agreement and these responsibilities further extend to initiatives with provinces and territories that set out programs such as the National Child Benefit, the Early Childhood Development Initiative and the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework;
- the degree of flexibility afforded provincial and territorial governments has led to significant variances in services and programs across the country, in direct violation of Canada's obligations as a signatory of the UNCRC, resulting in certain subpopulations of children systematically deriving no benefit from the above-mentioned programs; and
- the potential of children is being lost due to relative invisibility and the lack of standards requiring they be considered and addressed.

We, the undersigned, residents and citizens of Canada, call upon the House of Commons to:

1. Recognize children living in material deprivation, who are homeless, affected by parental addiction, parental incarceration, or government care experience;
2. Remedy the barriers within its own direct payments to families and systems like the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the Disability Tax Credit Certificate, and Registered Education Savings Plans;
3. Increase supports for these children at particular high risk of adverse life events and suffering the highest level of exclusion, and;
4. Set standards to reduce inter-provincial and territorial disparities that exclude children living in circumstances not considered under current eligibility rules.



## Appendix B

The Paper Petition is as follows:

### 2.1 A PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

SUPPORT THE CALL TO ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM SPECIAL  
PROTECTION MEASURES AND ASSISTANCE  
(ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF HIGHLY MOBILE CHILDREN)

We, the undersigned Citizens of Canada, draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following:

- WHEREAS, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children; the Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen;
- WHEREAS, The first paragraph of Article 3 of the UNCRC tells us that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children;
- WHEREAS, The Government of Canada ratified the UNCRC on December 12, 1991 and has responsibilities for the care of children as outlined in the National Child Agenda and the Social Union Framework; these responsibilities further extend to initiatives with provinces and territories that set out programs such as the National Child Benefit, the Early Childhood Development Initiative and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care;
- WHEREAS, Housing First funds are one size fits all, only fund for the adult individual, with no additional allocation for a parent with children and the amount is set at a rate per adult, which further materially deprives children;
- WHEREAS, many children are excluded from receipt of the Canada Child Benefit and Child Special Allowances, as they are in informal care arrangements wherein their caregivers are ineligible to claim the tax deduction for a child, and therefore cannot establish entitlement for the monthly payment;
- WHEREAS, the degree of flexibility afforded provincial and territorial governments has led to significant variances in services and programs across the country; in direct



violation of Canada's obligations as a signatory of the UNCRC, certain subpopulations of children systematically derive no benefit from the above-mentioned programs;

- WHEREAS, the potential of children is being lost due to relative invisibility and the lack of standards requiring they be considered and addressed;

THEREFORE, your petitioners call on the Government of Canada, having agreed to meet the standards in the UNCRC, to recognize the barriers within its own direct payments to families systems and remedy them; that the funded services like the Homelessness Partnering Initiative provide funding for client supports for children; that it provide Canada Child Benefit and Child Special Allowances for all children; that it needs to set standards within the Canada Social Transfer to ensure that all children-without discrimination in any form benefit from special protection measures and assistance and to recognize children of parents with addictions and homeless children in need of special support to enable them to achieve improved life outcomes and receive equal benefit to their rights under the UNCRC; that it reduce the level of material deprivation for children who move a lot for reasons related to homelessness, parental addiction, incarceration, or government care experience; that it reduce interprovincial and territorial disparities that exclude children living in circumstances not considered under current eligibility rules; and that it increase supports for children living with the highest level of exclusion.



## Appendix C

### Variations in Weight, Length, and Language of the paper petition versus the electronic petition

1. Variations in Weight: Electronic Petition
  - a. The Electronic Petition requires a minimum of 500 signatures prior to January 15th.
  - b. Once achieving 500 signatures, it guarantees a 1 minute presentation period, for the sponsoring Member of Parliament to discuss it in the House of Commons.
  - c. However, whether it receives 500 signatures, or 500,000 signatures, the Member only gets to present it once, for a total of 1 minute.
  - d. Once the petition has been presented, the government has 45 calendar days to respond.
  - e. It is then closed.
2. Variations in Weight: Paper Petition
  - a. The Paper Petition requires a minimum of 25 signatures, with no specific deadline.
  - b. Once achieving 25 signatures, they are sent to the Parliamentary Clerk's office, who then verifies them.
  - c. If all 25 signatures are verified, the sponsoring Member of Parliament is guaranteed a 1 minute presentation period.
  - d. Hereafter, for every 25 signatures verified, the sponsoring Member, or a delegated Member, is allotted 1 minute to present it to the House.
  - e. Every time the petition is presented in the House, the government has 45 calendar days to respond.
  - f. It remains open for an indefinite amount of time
3. Variations in Length
  - a. The Electronic Petition is capped at 250 words.
  - b. The Paper Petition had no definitive limitations in length.
4. Variations Language
  - a. As the electronic petition is substantially shorter, the language had to change in order to be more concise.



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*Located on unceded, Kanien'kehá:ka traditional territory*

POSTPONED



## Appendix D

### Rules, Regulations, and Guidelines Surrounding Signing the Electronic and Paper Petitions

In conjunction with Our Commons 'Paper Petitions - Guide for the Public'...

- The text of a paper petition must be handwritten, typed, printed or photocopied on sheets of paper of usual size, i.e. letter, measuring 21.5 cm x 28 cm (8.5 x 11 inches) or legal, 21.5 cm x 35.5 cm (8.5 x 14 inches). A petition submitted on paper of irregular size, or on any other material, is not acceptable.
- The text of a petition must not be altered either by erasing or crossing out words or by adding words or commentary. Any alteration will make the petition unacceptable.
- A paper petition must be free of any other matter attached or appended to, or written or printed on, the petition, e.g. additional documents, maps, pictures, logos, news articles, explanatory or supporting statements, or requests for support. A petition printed on the reverse of another document is not acceptable.
- There is no minimum age requirement for anyone signing a petition.
- The Signatory must be either a citizen, or resident of Canada.
- A petition must contain original signatures written directly on the document and not pasted, taped, photocopied, or otherwise transferred to it.
- The address may consist of at least one of the following
  - the signatory's full home address;
  - the signatory's city and province;
  - the signatory's Province and Postal code.

In conjunction with Our Commons 'Electronic Petitions – Guide for Signatories'...

- You can search for a petition that is of interest to you by going to the e-petitions website and searching by keyword, subject, or, if you know this information, by the petition number (in the format "e-123") or by the name of the MP who has agreed to sponsor it.
- In our case, it is E-1840 (CHILDREN'S RIGHTS)

TO BE A SIGNATORY:

- You must be a resident of Canada or a citizen of Canada.
- You may not use an e-mail address or a device with an IP address associated with the Government or the Parliament of Canada to sign an e-petition.



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- You must provide certain basic information to validate your identity.
- There is no minimum age requirement in order to sign an e-petition.

POSTPONED