

# Cowessess First Nation #73

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## *Press Release*

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### **CFN Response to Supreme Court Unanimous Ruling on the Rights of the Child**

**(Cowessess First Nation)** Chief & Council applaud the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada upholding the Indigenous Child Welfare Law and declaring it constitutional. The unanimous decision was issued Friday (February 9, 2024) morning, striking down and dismissing Quebec's opposition and subsequent appeal.

In a statement issued by Chief Erica Beaudin, she stated "This ruling reaffirms the sovereignty of our Nation's Acts and Legislations that supersede Canadian laws over the rights of our children. The miyo-pimatisiwin Act, and our own Constitution Act, reaffirm what we, as a Nation have always held true; Cowessess First Nation is a sovereign nation with the ability to create, implement, and enforce our own acts, legislations, structures, according to our Inherent and Treaty Rights, with international recognitions."

Chief Beaudin further added, "We commend the tireless work of Dr. Cindy Blackstock and her team for paving the way and continuing to succeed in legal arenas for the benefit of our children and those yet to come. Kininaskomitinawaw! Chi-miigwich!"

Bill C-92, An Act Respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children Youth and Families, opened the door for First Nations to develop and implement their own Acts asserting jurisdiction over their children in care.

The Cowessess First Nation's miyo-pimatisiwin Act was enacted in April of 2021, and asserts jurisdiction over Cowessess First Nations children in care on and off reserve. Cowessess was the first Nation to develop and implement its own Act governing the rights of the child, building upon Bill C-92.

Cowessess First Nation leadership would like to acknowledge the important work done by The Caring Society, and other First Nations parties, on their continued fight against Canada with respect to Jordan's Principle to ensure Canada ceases its discriminatory practices in First Nations Child and Family Services. This ruling lends great weight to that case, and we expect Canada to adhere to the recommendations already handed down by the Human Rights Tribunal.

As we continue negotiations in Canada on our C.92 Fiscal Agreement, we look forward to Canada fulfilling its obligations to Cowessess First Nation by adequately and meaningfully funding Cowessess First Nation in providing this critical need to Cowessess children and families.