



CHRISTIAN
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CHURCHES
IN CANADA

The Hon. Andrew Scheer, MP
Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition
The House of Commons
Algonquin Territory
Ottawa Ontario
K1A 0A6

Senators Lillian Dyck, Dennis Patterson, Don Plett, Scott Tannas and Norman Doyle.

June 11, 2019
The 11th anniversary of Prime Minister Harper's
Apology to Survivors of Indian Residential Schools

Respected Senators, Mr. Scheer:

We are one community of churches that has responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #48 by affirming the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a *Framework for Reconciliation*. The Declaration provides a foundational expression of Nation-to-Nation relationships, and echoes the sacred principles of covenant as reflected in treaties. We echo our colleagues and friends of the North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies in their declaration on Bill C-262:

Bill C-262 will move reconciliation beyond a set of noble statements and commitments into tangible legal commitments that draw us to mutual respect as relatives. The final report of the MMIWG Inquiry this week reminds us of the urgency of real steps for reconciliation. We are concerned to hear reports that Bill C-262 is meeting procedural roadblocks and is at risk of dying on the order paper. Because reconciliation is more than words, as relatives we urge you to pass Bill C-262 as soon as possible.

This is a critical moment when all of our choices are deeply consequential on the journey towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We urge those who have the capacity to enable the passage of this Bill to do so now, in an action that we believe will resonate in history as a critical turning point towards meaningful transformation. Whatever has happened to this point in this process, there is still an opportunity to act towards a more just future. We urge the Senate to affirm the cross party commitment of the House of Commons and pass Bill C-262 now.

(Excerpt from the June 8, 2019 Naiits declaration on Bill C-262)

The Christian Reformed churches in Canada are comprised of 260 churches and ministries across Canada. Our national office is located on the ancestral lands of the Mississauga people at 3475 Mainway, Burlington Ontario, L7R 3Y8

This week we mark, with solemn gratitude and resolve, the 11th anniversary of Prime Minister Harper's apology to the Survivors of Residential schools. Indeed, Prime Minister Harper anticipated the TRC as "a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us." TRC Call to Action 48 and Bill C-262 are an important part of the journey of mutual respect and right relationships for all children of Creator God in this place called Canada. As Bill C-262 goes through third reading in the Senate, please make every effort to pass this legislation as a measure that is consistent with Prime Minister Harper's words on June 11, 2008.

Praying and walking with you on the journey of reconciliation,

Rev. Darren Roorda
Canadian Ministries Director
Christian Reformed Church

Shannon Perez
Justice and Reconciliation Mobilizer
Canadian Indigenous Ministry Committee

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo
Canada Director
World Renew

Ron Vanden Brink
National Director
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Cc. Senator Sinclair, Romeo Saganash MP

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