

**COUNCIL OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES OF ONTARIO**

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\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

**The kids are not ok:**

**Ontario PC Government cuts Child Advocate Office**

The Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario is disappointed and frustrated with the recent decision by the Ontario Progressive Conservative government to repeal the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, (2007) therefore eliminating the office and all services mandated to protect Ontario’s most vulnerable population- children. As a feminist group dedicated to advocacy and the preservation of human rights we cannot stay silent on this egregious decision that will so adversely impact children across the province.

**What are the Priorities of this government?**

The current state of children’s welfare in Ontario is far from being able to function without a dedicated advocacy office. In September 2018 the Expert Panel on the Deaths of Children and Youth in Residential Placements, which was created last year by Ontario’s Chief Coroner Dirk Huyer, detailed the deaths of 12 Ontario children in care. The report went on to document the lack of early intervention and prevention services in place to support the health and safety of these children. Despite this documented evidence of provincial shortcomings and negligence in administering care services for minors, the PC government has made the decision to cut the only provincial office established solely for the intervention, advocacy, support and protection of children in Ontario.

**What is the Ontario Child Advocate Office?**

The office provides client-driven, rights-based support for child advocacy and can be utilized by youth contacting them directly or by adults who contact the office on behalf of children who require advocacy support. Why would the PC government take away the ability for children to seek adult support and guidance? This decision is not making Ontario better, stronger, or safer for children-it is doing the complete opposite by ensuring that children and minors in Ontario have one less service to listen to them, hear them, help them.

The Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario joins, Irwin Elman, Campaign 2000, Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC), First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, ISS Canada / SSI Canada, The Landon Pearson Resource Centre, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, Save the Children Canada and UNICEF Canada in condemning this decision and demanding a reinstatement of the Ontario Child Advocate office.

*The Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario (CEFSO) is the provincial voice for eight Elizabeth Fry Societies in Ontario. CEFSO monitors the conditions for both provincially and federally sentenced women in prison, through visits to jails and direct contact with women, and advocates for improvements to those conditions.*

**For further information or questions please contact:**

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