



May 28, 2025

Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia
Speaker of the House of Commons
237S, West Block
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Sent via email: Speaker.President@parl.gc.ca

Speaker/Uqaqtittiji,

I am writing to give notice under Standing Order 52(2) that I will be seeking leave later today to propose an emergency debate regarding the chronic and wilful failure of the Canadian Government to adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's order on Jordan's Principle. A [backlog of over 140,000 applications](#) combined with new restrictions on Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiative (ICFI) funding put in place during the prorogation of the 44th Parliament have had a harmful impact on the well-being of Indigenous children in Canada. This includes the emerging food security crisis in Nunavut caused, in large part, by the cancelation in April of the Hamlet Food Voucher Program, funded through ICFI, which fed over 15,000 Inuit children, [now at risk of starvation](#).

There is an urgent need for an Emergency Debate to allow Parliamentarians to address this national crisis for Indigenous children. They represent many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis constituents who are fearful for the health and well-being of their children, because they are being cut off from lifesaving supports. [In 2021](#), there were 459,215 Indigenous children aged 14 years and younger, representing one-quarter (25.4%) of the total Indigenous population in Canada. By comparison, 16.0% of the non-Indigenous population was aged 14 years and younger. The issue of Jordan's Principle funding impacts Canadians in all provinces and territories.

In the Province of Manitoba, there are currently 12,000 children in care, 90% who are Indigenous. Changes to the requirements to access Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiative result in keeping First Nations and Inuit children in poverty and less healthy than non-Indigenous children. [Indigenous children have been cut off](#) from educational supports and resources, including speech therapy and food security programming. [Children with medical issues](#) are denied the funding to address unhealthy living conditions which exacerbates their symptoms.

In late April, the [Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and First Nations have called upon the government to uphold their human rights obligations](#) under Jordan's principle instead of placing restrictions of critical services required by children while governments, delay and make cutbacks to services.

In Nunavut, over 15,000 Inuit children are struggling with starvation every day since the federal government [cancelled the food voucher program](#) during the federal election campaign. In Manitoba, the program fed 407 Inuit children, providing for 197 families. Nunavik, Quebec is home to 12,590 Inuit. Newfoundland and Labrador is home to 2,095 Inuit. The northern region of Yukon and NWT is home to 3,145 Inuit. And outside these four areas, there are another 21,825 Inuit living across Canada.

The national child poverty rate is 18.1%. A [November 2024 report from Campaign 2000](#) found the territory has the highest rate of child poverty at 42% and the highest rate of food insecurity of any Canadian province or territory. Although the population of Nunavut is small, food insecurity in the territories is of concern to all Canadians, given the scale and the severity of the problem.

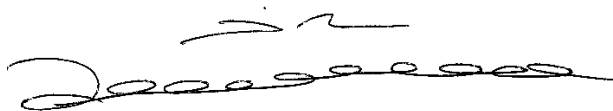
The University of Saskatchewan [released a report](#) this month that investigated the impacts of the food voucher program in Pangnirtung, one of 25 communities in Nunavut. Before the food voucher program was in place, 98.4% of people in the hamlet reported they were unable "to feed their children enough at one point in the last year due to insufficient income." The study found that statistic reversed after the food voucher program began, with 98% of people being able to afford to feed their children, and 83% reported their children were eating healthier.

The sweeping changes made to Jordan's Principle and ICFI funding were implemented during the prorogation and dissolution of the 44th Parliament, and during the federal election campaign. I am bringing this critical national issue to your attention at the very first moment available, at the first sitting of the House of Commons in this new Parliament.

I respectfully ask that you grant Members of Parliament the opportunity to debate the need for urgent action from the federal government to address the implementation of the Tribunal's order on Jordan's Principle. The well-being of Indigenous children is at risk, and as the matter has gone unchecked over the last few months, it classifies as an emergency and a matter of urgent consideration for Parliament.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this application.

Qujannamiik,



Lori Idlout
MP for Nunavut



Leah Gazan
MP for Winnipeg Centre