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November 29, 2013

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MP, Liberal Party of Canada

Written Proof Harper Doesn't Care About Aboriginal Education

Posted: 11/27/2013 12:24 pm

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Last week's sensational release of documents from the [RCMP's Information to Obtain \(ITO\)](#) production order in the ongoing Senate scandal created a political firestorm. This is not surprising, given it is now abundantly clear that the RCMP believes individuals in the Prime Minister's inner circle violated the Criminal Code.

But buried in the tsunami of evidence were documents which also shine a light on what the Conservative government really thinks about equitable funding for First Nations schools. This peek behind the scenes of the Conservatives' cynical political machine underscores why we cannot trust Minister Valcourt when he says we should just pass government legislation reforming First Nations education without any money attached and trust that "funding will follow."

We now know the Conservatives' refusal to fund First Nations students attending school on reserves at the same level as their provincial counterparts is coming straight from the top. An internal PMO memo released as part of the ITO suggested language to the Prime Minister to reprimand the Conservative Leader in the Senate for not having better control over Senators and the work of Senate Committees. The memo specifically uses a Senate report calling on the government to "invest heavily in Aboriginal education" as an example of a failure to ensure "Government messaging and direction are followed."

This is not just a shocking example of Stephen Harper's anti-democratic command and control style of government, but clearly demonstrates that the Prime Minister callously

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refuses to provide First Nations students with the equality of opportunity they deserve. The federal government only provides **half to two-thirds** of the per-student funding for First Nation schools compared to provincial schools and only one third of First Nations students are graduating high school. Rather than fixing the funding gaps highlighted by First Nations, the **Auditor General** and numerous **other reports**, the response of the Prime Minister is to simply clamp down on Parliamentarians trying to highlight the issue. Whether it is First Nations water systems, housing or education, the Conservative answer is to ignore funding shortfalls and download further responsibilities onto already underfunded First Nations with no additional resources.

When the Conservative government quietly released its unilateral proposal for First Nations education late in the evening on October 22, it quickly received a failing grade from coast to coast to coast. Given what those ITO documents show, it is not surprising that First Nations have highlighted the fact that the proposal ignores the core problem of equitable funding and imposes new requirements on First Nations communities without new resources.


Even before the release of their top down, one-size-fits-all government proposal, Minister Valcourt made it clear that **he will not even discuss funding until his 'reforms' are passed**. However, if the Conservatives do push through their made in Ottawa First Nations education legislation, there is absolutely no reason to believe that additional resources will follow. In fact, the ITO documents show that this government is simply not willing to put any resources behind their promises and are dismissive of the idea of investing further resources in Aboriginal education. They remind us that there is only one minister -- the Prime Minister -- who makes decisions in this government and his track record of refusing to deal with the outright discrimination that exists when funding First Nations students makes it extremely difficult to believe that equal funding will be part of any future education reform on his watch.

This week AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo issued an **open letter** flatly telling the government that "the current Federal Proposal for a Bill for First Nation Education is not acceptable to First Nations." He has also outlined the "absolute need for a funding guarantee for First Nation children to learn in a safe, secure environment nurtured within their languages and cultures."




Given the views expressed behind closed doors at PMO, and previously released government documents classifying Aboriginal Peoples as "**adversaries**," it is completely understandable why First Nations are not willing to take the government's word that issues like funding will be dealt with after they push through their paternalistic education legislation.


Last month, James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, gave this government very **clear advice**: push pause on this flawed, top-down strategy. The Conservative government needs to go back to the drawing board, sit down with First Nations communities and build a workable, fully funded plan that respects, supports and empowers First Nations to control their own education systems.

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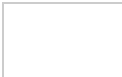


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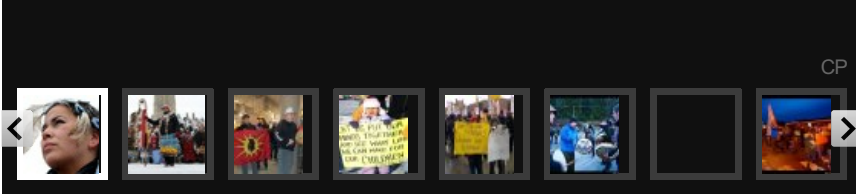
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sharkshooter ★ 3
6 Fans

How about equal obligations as well? Let the First Nations peoples be treated the same as the rest of Canada!!!

28 NOV 3:15 PM

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Dave_Turchynsky

9 Fans

★ 6

First there's the issue of paying them back for the land our ancestors stole.

28 NOV 4:41 PM

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350orbust

21 Fans

★ 9

McCluth is under the mistaken impression that First Nations are lucky to be living off the rest of Canadians "without accountability". May I remind him, and all Canadians, that we settlers occupy land that was either obtained thru treaty negotiations with Britain, or are in fact living on unceded First Nations territory. Our history of honouring our treaties is abysmal, almost as bad as our neighbours to the South. Not convinced? Then educate yourself, and it wouldn't be bad to start with "An Inconvenient Indian" by Thomas King. And quit whining about how "canadian taxpayers" are so hard done by. As the saying goes, if you own land in Canada, thank an Indian.

28 NOV 2:10 PM

REPLY FAVE MORE



Dave_Turchynsky

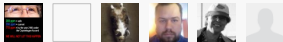
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★ 3

I won't thank an Indian but I'll thank the First Nation. ;)

28 NOV 4:42 PM

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Justa_Gamez

1 Fan

I say stop funding first nations all together! Accountability of the funding is never proved.. ever.. And i know first hand of first nation scandals of government funding.. Heres a solution.. First Nations.. contibute more to society instead of sticking in your own bubble.. Open something besides a casino up. Build something for other Canadians to develope from or gain from besides yourselves.. Poor thought concetption.. Put them in a public school and let them excel on their own. Work for the same people as everyone else. First Nations.. Youre a minority because you seggragate yourself in hopes youll be your own country. Join the team or get your own bank roll!

28 NOV 1:36 PM

REPLY FAVE MORE



BigBri007

3 Fans

★ 5

You are a minority too.

28 NOV 4:06 PM

REPLY FAVE MORE



4 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

Read Conversation →



mccluth

0 Fans

★ 2

In order to fix the problem, you must first know what it is. The canadian taxpayer has for years given funding to first nations without accountability and the result has been absolute failure. The liberals, and you can be sure the NDP, advocate for more money.

Just look at T. Spencer to see what that produces. I and I believe the silent majority of Canadians are tired of funding without accountability the first nations industry of consultants and chiefs. We invest over 8 billion dollars annually and it seems it is never enough. Carolyn Bennett, you have it wrong and I do not believe the vast majority of Canadians support any more money being spent until we know for certain where and what it is going to and for.

28 NOV 11:09 AM

REPLY FAVE MORE



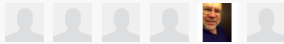
bjorn111

2 Fans

well said!

28 NOV 2:22 PM

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9 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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cyder45

9 Fans

★ 12

Why am I not shocked by this in the slightest. Harper doesn't believe in equal rights, he believes in corporations above people. Harper doesn't believe in healthcare, he believes it should be private. Harper doesn't want marijuana to be legal, but he thinks Rob Ford did nothing wrong. Harper is a joke, and I sure hope the people who voted for him regret it.

28 NOV 10:27 AM

REPLY FAVE MORE



Havenounce

1 Fan

what does equal rights, making marijuana or Ford have to do with the story. I'm sure there a lot of things that leaders don't really care about but still have to deal with because it comes with the job. To me you cannot call it equal rights because many Canadians who work hard and pay taxes cannot to send their own kids to higher education, people who went to war for Canada and came back missing limbs and have other problems but don't get the compensation they DESERVE from our government. So do I expect my leader to care about every single problem in this country..no I don't. What I do want the leaders to do is take care of things that the citizens that voted them in care about.

28 NOV 3:57 PM

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5 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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Dave_Turchynsky

9 Fans

★ 13

Does anyone remember any politician who reviles the citizens as much as Stephen Harper? I don't...

28 NOV 8:39 AM

REPLY FAVE MORE



Gerry_Gagnon

1 Fan

Trudeau had far more contempt for people in general; Mulroney only cared for his inner circle; and Chretien had no use for English people...

28 NOV 10:32 AM

REPLY FAVE MORE



3 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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Anne_Petersons

93 Fans ♥

★ 13

Harper and his band of scoundrels are completely lacking in any sort of compassion for anyone. Not seniors, not soldiers, not aboriginals, not the unemployed, not the poor, not the sick. They look after the rich and the corporations.

28 NOV 8:21 AM

↩ REPLY ★ FAVE ⋮ MORE



Havenounce

1 Fan ♥

★ 2

don't be angry with him...be angry with the people who voted him in.

28 NOV 3:58 PM

↩ REPLY ★ FAVE ⋮ MORE



Brian_Cyr

28 Fans ♥

★ 6

steven harper is the Lance Armstrong of Canadian politics.

28 NOV 7:55 AM

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BigBri007

3 Fans ♥

How so? Lance Armstrong always won.

28 NOV 4:11 PM

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4 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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RevDocDave

61 Fans ♥

★ 12

No doubt Harper would like to see native education carried out through a return to residential schools, that would certainly please the Conservative base.

28 NOV 7:35 AM

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Gerry_Gagnon

1 Fan ♥

That's just an ugly thought on your part, with absolutely no foundation in fact. I hope that it made you feel better..

28 NOV 6:36 PM

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John_Bryan_Mancheese

0 Fans ♥

we are not indians ha_ wood

28 NOV 6:51 AM

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