

Treaty 3 Grassroots Citizens Coalition

Group/Participants
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Spokesperson: Kelvia Chicago-Boucher
Independent Peoples Grand Chief Lana Kooshet (Elected August 10, 2010)
Traditional Elder: Tommy Keesick

The Coalition consists of over 450 participants; the driving force of the group is 12 people

Since its creation in 2008, the Treaty 3 Grassroots Citizens Coalition Group/Participants (the Coalition) has attempted to bring its concerns to those in political office on many levels, including the Auditor General of Canada and the elected leadership of the First Nations, including the Federal and Provincial governments. To date, the Coalition has not received any response to our concerns that has provided any positive value to our cause. In addition, even though the Canadian Human Rights process is now applicable to our reserve communities, we have been unable to utilize its benefits.

The Coalition's primary message is that funding that is specifically set aside for the Anishinabec as a whole are not reaching the grassroots Anishinabec. The Coalition strongly believes that there is certainly enough awareness of this problem by both elected officials and Canadian taxpayers, but not one person is interested in implementing any solutions.

As has been seen recently all over the world, those people that comprise the greater number of people are standing up and saying "enough is enough", and demanding changes to the structure that keeps the 1% of the population rich and the 99% poor.

Accordingly, the long term goal for the Coalition is to begin the implementation of the solution.

In Canada, it is the grassroots Anishinabec that need to hold our own elected leadership accountable. However, time after time it is necessary to go to court to allow for such accountability, as there are no other solutions or methods available to us. While justice may theoretically be available to all persons within a democratic country like Canada, only those who can pay to access the system can receive justice.

As a result, the justice system does not work for the poor or people that are living on welfare or on the streets of Canada. As a result, this inability to access the justice system

is preyed upon by those that receive funding from the Federal and Provincial governments, as any funding for the grassroots people is eaten - up in administration costs, honorarium for our leaders and other questionable expenses. Although this system is available, it is ineffective and unaccountable. For example, at one time to delivery \$1.00 to the grassroots Anishinabec who need programs and services, it took \$0.01 cent, now \$0.99 cents is used to deliver \$1.00

The Coalition is on a campaign to ensure that the funding dollars that are provided to our leadership and intended for the needy grassroots Anishinabec reach them. Our only means to do so is to utilize the justice system, but such utilization requires funds.

The Coalition is appealing to any and all persons that believe in helping the poor and the needy in Canada by donating \$1.00 to the Coalition in order to help it hold our leadership accountable. The Coalition has setup a bank account to hold such funds donated for the cause at:

Bank of Nova Scotia 40 Main Street South
Kenora, Ontario
Treaty 3 Grassroots Citizens Coalition
Account # 902170097918

Although the Coalition has been bringing attention to this matter for two years, it is now in 2013 that some Aboriginal service providing groups are only starting to see the effects of these services being cut back in funding. A recent example is the Treaty 3 Police Services.

The Coalition spokesperson would like to say to these service providers "when your wages and your programs are in jeopardy only then do you want to do something. Now you know how the broke anishinaba feels when they are not getting any benefits from programs that are suppose to benefit them".

The coalition still believes in the journey to healing and self-sufficiency. All people that believe in fairness and justice need to stand together and support the solution: "Try Again - Toonie Walk for Loonie Justice"

On September 3, 2013, Coalition participants will again attempt to walk from Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation near Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. Supports from Manitoba and other supportive groups from eastern Ontario will be joining the Coalition. Member of Parliament for the Kenora riding, Greg Rickford has committed to joining us for part of the way as a supporter/walker

For more information search Treaty 3 Grassroots Citizens Coalition Group or Kelvin Chicago-Boucher or ChicagoBoucher@yahoo.com

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Five Principles/Recommendations

1. The current system by which First Nation leaders select their auditors has no accountability, leading corrupt chief and council members to select those who will quietly do their bidding. The selection of auditors complicit in poor governance practice is sometimes aided by local INAC officials who promote their own associates for the positions. The solution to this problem is obvious; the Auditor General should appoint auditors for First Nations and payment for services should be paid from a central fund that is beyond the influence of regional officials.
2. It is no secret that elections in First Nation communities are often tainted by corruption that is facilitated by local electoral officers. Such officers are often friends or relatives of the candidates they oversee. Even when they are not, electoral officers face enormous political and community pressure to produce certain results. The solution to this is apparent: electoral officers should be appointed by an arms-length body such as Election Canada
3. Band members, especially those who live off-reserve, are frequently denied the basic services to which they are entitled and instead must watch the resources of their band being squandered on endless meetings and patronage appointments. Those who speak out about such practice face serious reprisals. There is no process to hold First Nation leaders accountable. One solution to this problem is to: appoint an Ombudsperson who can investigate the fairness and competence of First Nation leaders on behalf of individual complainants.
4. Funding formulas for First Nation bands are tied to the number of "status Indians" listed on band lists. It is unfortunately well known that many of those who appear on "official" band lists are in fact deceased. This is not only corrupt practice but is extremely disrespectful to our deceased Anishinaba ancestors. To stop this practice we recommend the federal government must keep track of deaths on First Nations communities to ensure deceased people are not exploited for political purposes.
5. First Nations leaders and their friends and associates receive considerable money to attend events or simply to put their name to a given project or cause. The common means by which this money is delivered is through the umbrella mechanism of "honorarium". Too often these honorarium do not reflect any meaningful purpose or service but simply act as a discreet means of channeling money. This system not only facilitates corruption but reduces the overall transparency by which First Nations and their leaders are paid. The solution is an easy one: end the system of honorarium and pay First Nations and their leaders through a transparent system of wages and salaries.