



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

600-177 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0W5, Canada

Phone: 204.984.9150, Toll Free: 1.888.786.6707, Fax: 204.984.9185, Website: www.elcic.ca

March 28, 2018

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Department of Justice Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8
mcu@justice.gc.ca

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I am writing to express our church's support for repealing Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, as per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #6: *We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.*

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada states that *Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.*

Physical punishment of children and youth plays no useful role in their upbringing and poses only risks to their development. Rather, parents, guardians and those exercising social authority over young people should be strongly encouraged to develop alternative and positive approaches to discipline.

I remind you that Canada has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Right of the Child. Article 19 of the Convention states that signatories shall take all appropriate legislative measures to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence. To date, 50 countries have banned physical punishment of children in all settings, including the home.

We were reminded of TRC Call to Action #6 during a presentation by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the 2017 ELCIC National Convention. In the presentation, we heard that *debate surrounds Section 43 because some believe it is a justification of violence against children in the name of correction. ... The TRC believes that corporal punishment is a relic of a discredited past and has no place in the Canadian home or school.*

We are grateful for the survivors of Indian Residential Schools, who have shown courage in testifying before the TRC and who led the way in calling for an end to this practice. Living out a TRC Call to Action is a step toward reconciliation.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson", preceded by a small cross symbol.

Rev. Susan C. Johnson,
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

cc: Hon. Rob Nicholson, MP, Official Opposition Critic for Justice
Hon. Murray Rankin, MP, NDP Critic for Justice
Nira Dookeran, Green Party Critic for Justice
ELCIC National Church Council