



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

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Assembly of First Nations says Citizenship Issue does not end with McIvor case

Although the Supreme Court of Canada announced, today, that it will not hear Sharon McIvor's case regarding the continued gender discrimination in the "status" provisions of *Indian Act*, AFN National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and AFN Women's Council Chair Kathleen McHugh stated that First Nations will continue to push the federal government to fully and meaningfully work with First Nations to restore the inherent rights of First Nations to determine who their citizens are.

"Status provisions of the Indian Act have created problems for First Nations and our citizens, and continue to divide our communities. It is time for the federal government to get out of the business of controlling First Nations citizenship and make way for First Nations to exercise our own laws, that will redress discrimination and damage caused by the *Indian Act*," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo.

"We congratulate Sharon McIvor on her courage in fighting this long and difficult legal battle on behalf of all First Nations' families. However, this should have never been a court battle. At its heart, this is a human rights issue. The federal government's repeated refusal to work with First Nations governments to address it is a stain on Canada's reputation," said the Chair of the Assembly of First Nations Women's Council, Kathleen McHugh.

She also added that the AFN has long supported the issue of restoring status to women. "First Nation Chiefs have passed at least 3 national resolutions calling on government to immediately address this issue, to no avail."

Sharon McIvor, a First Nations citizen, launched a case challenging section 6 of the Indian Act, which governs Indian Status, as discriminatory because it treats the descendents of Indian women who married non-Indian men differently from the descendents of Indian men who married non-Indian women.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is pursuing an amendment to the *Indian Act* to respond to direction from the BC Court of Appeal, to be in place by April 9, 2010. First Nations have not been adequately consulted regarding amendments, nor provided clear information on the impacts for their communities.

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations people in Canada.

The AFN Women's Council ensures the perspectives of First Nations' women are included in all AFN policy directives and activities, as well as ensuring that the AFN is an effective advocate on behalf of First Nations women.

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