



October 13, 2016

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Via email

Ms. Jody Rempel  
Committee Clerk  
Standing Committee on Legislative Offices  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 9820 – 107 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7

8th Floor, 9925-109 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J8  
Canada

Tel: 780.427.4222

Fax: 780.422.9555

[www.oag.ab.ca](http://www.oag.ab.ca)

Dear Ms. Rempel:

**Child and Youth Advocate Act Review**

I am writing to you to provide input to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices (the Committee) and its review of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* (the Act).

My comments are focused on the Advocate's reporting responsibilities within the Act and its processes to fulfil them. We compared the reporting requirements within the *Auditor General Act* to those in the Act under review. We also discussed our comments with management at the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

There are two areas that the Committee should consider in its review.

The *Auditor General Act*, via Sections 21 through 24, establishes an Audit Committee. The Audit Committee's role is to meet with the Auditor General to review audit reports prior to their release. The Audit Committee also receives information to provide advice on the scope and results of audits of government entities. The Audit Committee may also ask questions of the President of Treasury Board regarding financial matters of the Crown during their review of the province's draft financial statements. A similar external committee associated with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate would provide a similar final review function of the Advocate's reports.

The second area for consideration in the review of the Act is the relationship between the Auditor General and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Section 26 of the *Auditor General Act* provides that the Auditor General attend meetings of a select standing committee to contribute supplementary information respecting financial statements or an auditor general's report. Reports of the Auditor General of Alberta and the Government of Alberta's public accounts are automatically referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts under its standing orders.

A similar legislative standing committee established under the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* could have reports referred to it from the Advocate, and receive information and responses from a ministry. For example, the Department of Human Services could report on items in the Advocate's reports on vulnerable children and youth who receive services from the Government of Alberta. A legislative standing committee focusing on administration, not policy, would help to ensure the implementation of recommendations made in reports by the Advocate.

I would be pleased to answer questions or expand on these suggestions for enhancements to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* should the Committee request this during its review process. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.

Yours truly,



Merwan N. Saher FCPA, FCA  
Auditor General

GA/rw

c: Mr. Del Graff, Child and Youth Advocate  
Ms. Bonnie Russell, Director, Strategic Support, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

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