



**United Way**  
**Calgary and Area**  
Building a great city for all.

LO-CYAA-054

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Reg. Charity Number: 13022 9750 RR0001

October 14, 2016

The Honourable Irfan Sabir  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Sabir:

United Way of Calgary and Area has a long history of commitment to supporting vulnerable children and youth in our city. Agency partners like McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary and YMCA Calgary, among others, work hard every day with children and youth who have experience receiving child welfare services or with the youth criminal justice system. We see the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate as a key provincial partner in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable children and youth and advocating in their interest.

United Way of Calgary and Area welcomes the opportunity to share our feedback on the Child and Youth Advocate Act. In general we believe the legislation is sound and have identified the following elements where clarification could further enhance its intended outcomes:

**Age limits:** We would like to see greater clarity for the Advocate to extend the age limit beyond 18 years to accommodate intervention for youth who are subject to a family enhancement agreement under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act.

**Designated services:** We recognize the significant amount of work that has taken place to include youth involved in the criminal justice system under the mandate of the Advocate and would welcome public discussion in the future around expanding the mandate to overlapping areas such as education and health. As we all grapple with the complexity of the social issues impacting our society's vulnerable children and youth, we encourage systems-thinking and cross-ministry collaboration as important strategies for greater impact.

**Scope and power of the advocate to fulfil their role:** We believe the Act could provide greater clarity regarding the kinds of information the Advocate can request and from whom, while continuing to uphold Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection regulations. Additionally, we would encourage the Committee to consider adding to the Act the ability to collect information from collateral sources in the community.

**Truth and Reconciliation:** Indigenous children and youth receive child welfare services or experience the youth criminal justice system at far higher rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Given that, we encourage the Standing Committee to review the recommendations made in the recent OCYA report, Voices for Change – Aboriginal child welfare in Alberta, and consider any viable opportunities to incorporate these recommendations into the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Child and Youth Advocate Act and contribute our feedback.

Sincerely,

  
Lucy Miller, Ed. D.  
President and CEO

cc: David Shepherd, Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices