



MEDIA RELEASE | March 11, 2025

Syilx Okanagan Chiefs Calling Out Racism by Elected Official MLA Dallas Brodie

Syilx Okanagan Territory: The Chiefs Executive Council is angered by the harmful comments by MLA Dallas Brodie (Vancouver-Quilchena) and her blatant racism towards survivors of Indian residential schools. These comments are insulting and traumatizing to our Elders, survivors, and families. We are distressed about how these comments infiltrate all levels of government and are further perpetuated by elected officials. Denialism has no place on our shared path to truth and reconciliation, which our governments have committed to. We acknowledge the BC Conservative Party for taking a stand against hateful words that minimize the harms of Indian residential schools, mislead the public, and fan the flames of discrimination against Indigenous people.

We are distressed to see elected officials intentionally distort the realities of residential schools, and particularly the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The horrors of these schools are well documented in government archives, volumes of testimony through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and in research undertaken by many academics and First Nations. Our syilx Okanagan Elders, survivors and their families traveled a long, painful road and have fought hard to have their experiences recognized—some of which are recorded in the Okanagan Nation Alliance’s book, *Take the Indian Out of the Child* (2018), which includes testimonies of the crimes and abuse that took place at the schools in Kamloops and Cranbrook. Cruel comments such as those in Brodie’s public letter delegitimize these realities and distort the public understanding of the truth.

We call on all Canadians citizens to hold their public officials accountable. It is unfortunate that statements such as Brodie’s are not new—and even more concerning that they are shared openly by others including two more Conservative MLAs: Tara Armstrong (Kelowna-Lake Country) and Jordan Kealy (Peace River-North). These politicians are cynically using residential schools as an opportunistic means of leveraging potential power. The very real possibility of more elected officials joining an independent party with these perspectives is a direct threat to all Indigenous peoples and will be a stark barrier to true and meaningful reconciliation.

This racist propaganda is a direct result of how slowly federal and provincial governments have moved to enact the TRC Calls to Action and the failure of Canada’s education system. We call on all levels of government to uphold their responsibilities to truth and reconciliation. Racism, denialism, and the deep disrespect shown by these elected officials must be addressed whenever present. There can be no reconciliation until all Canadians understand the horrific realities of Indian residential schools and the impacts they continue to have on Indigenous people today.

“All Canadians share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.”

— Principle 6 of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission

For More Information Contact

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