

NEWS RELEASE

SYLVIA JONES, MPP *Dufferin-Caledon*

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MPP's Jones and Elliott Question Minister on Children's Aid Societies

(Queen's Park) – Progressive Conservative MPP's Sylvia Jones (Dufferin-Caledon) and Christine Elliott (Whitby-Oshawa) today questioned the Minister of Children and Youth Services today on the judicial review filed last week in London by eleven Children's Aid Societies (CAS), including Durham.

In the fall of 2009, an unprecedented thirty-seven CASs' requested a formal ministerial review of their budgets, also known as a Section 14 Review. A judicial review is a legal procedure where the court reviews a decision that has been made by the government. The purpose of judicial review is to ensure that the government has complied with the law in reaching its decision. The affidavits filed allege the government review process was biased and the outcome predetermined.

"Children's Aid Societies have a legislated responsibility to provide front-line care for the most vulnerable children in this province," said Jones. "Over the past two years, CASs have sought budget reviews, presented numerous submissions, prepared business cases for cost reductions and met with Ministry staff as well as with the minister to seek solutions for the funding shortfalls. Now this Liberal government has put the CASs' backs against the wall, and they feel they have no other avenue but a judicial review."

Durham CAS was one of the eleven agencies to have filed for a judicial review last week. They are facing an almost \$4 million deficit, and are projecting a 5.4% increase in intake this year. Just last month the Durham CAS was forced to eliminate 31 full-time positions. They now face the challenge of providing the same quality and mandated services to the community with already thinly stretched resources.

"Families in the Durham region have a right to be concerned," said Elliott. "Provincial legislation says that Children's Aid Societies need to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Even with the reduction in staff Durham is still in a deficit position. How does the Minister expect Children's Aid Societies to provide more care for less money? Something just doesn't add up."

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Sylvia Jones MPP, Working for You