

NEWS RELEASE

SYLVIA JONES, MPP *Dufferin-Caledon*

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MPP Jones Again Questions Minister on Children's Aid Societies

(Queen's Park) – Progressive Conservative MPP and Critic for Children and Youth Services Sylvia Jones (Dufferin-Caledon) again questioned the Minister today on the judicial review filed in London by eleven Children's Aid Societies (CAS).

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."

Children's Aid Societies from across Ontario were at Queen's Park today to educate MPP's on their growing mandate and funding crisis. Many CASs' had to draw from a line of credit last year to cover their costs, but that leaves them beginning the year with a deficit.

"Children's Aid Societies cannot just shut their doors or stop answering the phones," said Jones. "Provincial legislation says that Children's Aid Societies need to ensure the safety and well-being of every child who needs it. The Minister knows the roles and responsibilities CASs' have in their communities. By letting it get to the extent of filing for a judicial review proves that the Minister is unwilling to work hand-in-hand with the societies as they have been proposing."

The 11 agencies seeking a Judicial Review are the Children's Aid Society Of Brant, Chatham-Kent Children's Services, Durham Children's Aid Society, Family and Children's Services of St Thomas and Elgin, City of Kingston & County of Frontenac Children's Aid Society, Haldimand & Norfolk Children's Aid Society, Huron Perth Children's Aid Society, Children's Aid Society of Oxford County, Nipissing & Parry Sound Children's Aid Society, Timiskaming Child and Family Services, and Child and Family Services of Timmins and District.

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Sylvia Jones MPP, Working for You