

Nov. 15, 2011

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legislative Assembly
Province of British Columbia

B.C. Representative for Children and Youth reappointed for a second term

VICTORIA - Members of the all-party Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth have unanimously recommended that the House reappoint Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond for a second term as the Representative for Children and Youth for British Columbia.

"During her first term, Ms. Turpel-Lafond has shown outstanding leadership in defining the new position of Representative for Children and Youth," said committee chair Colin Hansen. "We are pleased to recommend her reappointment for another five years."

"In the interview, we were impressed with her strong commitment to continuing the work of her office in advocacy, monitoring and investigation," added Mable Elmore, deputy chair.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was first appointed by the House as the Province's first Representative for Children and Youth on November 27, 2006. As an officer of the Legislature, the appointment was made on the unanimous recommendation of an all-party special committee.

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The members of the Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth are:

Colin Hansen, MLA (Vancouver-Quilchena), Chair;
Mable Elmore, MLA (Vancouver-Kensington), Deputy Chair;
Rob Howard, MLA (Richmond Centre);
Maurine Karagianis, MLA (Esquimalt-Royal Roads);
Ben Stewart, MLA (Westside-Kelowna);
Dr. Moira Stilwell, MLA (Vancouver-Langara);
Claire Trevena, MLA (North Island)

The report is available on the committee website at <http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/39thparl/session-4/rfcay/index.htm> or by contacting:

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Bio

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was appointed B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth in November 2006. The Representative supports children,

youth and families who need help in dealing with the child-serving system, provides oversight to the Ministry of Children and Family Development and advocates for improvements to the child-serving system. The Representative is an Independent Officer of the Legislature.

Ms Turpel-Lafond is a judge on leave from the Saskatchewan Provincial Court.

She worked as a criminal law judge in youth and adult courts, with an emphasis on developing partnerships to better serve the needs of young people in the justice system, particularly sexually exploited children and youth, and children and youth with disabilities, such as those who suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

She holds a doctorate of law from Harvard Law School and a master's degree in international law from Cambridge University, a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, and a bachelor of arts degree from Carleton University.

In 2007, the Indigenous Bar Association awarded her the distinction of 'Indigenous Peoples' Counsel'. As well, Time Magazine has twice bestowed honours upon Ms Turpel-Lafond, naming her one of the '100 Global Leaders of Tomorrow' in 1994, and one of the 'Top 20 Canadian Leaders for the 21st Century' in 1999.

Ms Turpel-Lafond is the elected President of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, an alliance of provincial children's advocates from across the country who champion the voice and rights of children in their respective provinces and territories. She also serves on the Board of Directors of UNICEF Canada.

A member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and a mother of four, she is active in her First Nations community.