



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 15, 2016

Legislative Assembly – Province of British Columbia

Special Committee recommends new Representative for Children and Youth

VICTORIA – The all-party Special Committee to Appoint a Representative for Children and Youth has unanimously recommended that Bernard Richard be appointed as Representative for Children and Youth. The committee’s recommendation is included in a report released today.

“The committee was impressed by Mr. Richard’s passion for serving children and youth, his successful management of public sector organizations, and his considerable experience with indigenous communities,” said committee chair Don McRae. “He also brings a record of high ethical standards, fairness and accountability, and a principled and collaborative leadership style, which will support his work as Representative.”

“We look forward to Mr. Richard providing continued strong leadership to the important position of Representative for Children and Youth,” added committee deputy chair Michelle Mungall. “His breadth of background, experience, and abilities will enable him to build on Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond’s many contributions as Representative in serving British Columbia’s children and youth and their families.”

The Representative is a non-partisan officer of the Legislature who provides advocacy services to children, young adults and families regarding designated services; monitors, reviews, and audits the effectiveness of these services; and reviews, investigates, and reports on the critical injuries and deaths of children. The appointment is for a term of five years, and may be renewed for one additional five year term.

The committee’s report is available at <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/rfcay>

Bio attached.

The Members of the committee are:

Don McRae, MLA (Comox Valley), chair;

Michelle Mungall, MLA (Nelson-Creston), deputy chair;

Carole James, MLA (Victoria-Beacon Hill);
John Martin, MLA (Chilliwack)
Laurie Throness, MLA (Chilliwack-Hope)

For further information:

Kate Ryan-Lloyd

Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees

Room 224, Parliament Buildings

Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4

Telephone: 250 356-2933 (collect)

Toll-free: 1 877 428-8337

Fax: 250 356-8172

E-mail: ClerkComm@leg.bc.ca

Biographical Information – Bernard Richard

Bernard Richard is a lawyer whose early career was in social work. He is a member of the Canadian Bar Association, the Law Society of New Brunswick, and the Association des juristes d'expression française du Nouveau-Brunswick. He practiced law at Cap-Pelé, New Brunswick, with the law firm of Richard, Savoie, Belliveau. He was elected to the Cap-Pelé municipal council and served as deputy mayor. He was also the Secretary General of the Société Nationale de l'Acadie from 1980 to 1984.

Mr. Richard served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick from 1991 to 2003. During that period, he held the following responsibilities: Minister of State for Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General; Minister of Education; and Minister responsible for social policy renewal. He assumed the role of Leader of the Official Opposition, Opposition House Leader and Chair of caucus. He has twice been the chargé de mission for the Americas region of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie.

In 2004, Mr. Richard assumed the responsibilities of New Brunswick Ombudsman, including oversight of right to information and privacy matters. He was the sixth person to occupy this position. Mr. Richard has chaired the Forum of Canadian Ombudsmen, the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie. In November 2006, Mr. Richard was added the mandate of New Brunswick's first Child and Youth Advocate. In those capacities, he has published a number of reports, most notably pertaining to youth mental health, First Nations child welfare, and the youth criminal justice system.

In recent years, Mr. Richard was asked by the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly to carry out a review of the roles and functions of New Brunswick's eight legislative officers. Several of his recommendations have been implemented, including the adoption of fixed, non-renewable terms for office holders. Finally, he leads a team of experts, on behalf of New Brunswick First Nations Chiefs, tasked with developing a new model and approach to Child and Family Services delivery for children and their families. This assignment includes coordinating the oversight provided by a tripartite Working Group with federal, provincial and First Nations representatives.

Mr. Richard has been actively involved in numerous organizations. He has been a member and past Chair of the Board of Directors of Plan Canada, one of Canada's major non-governmental organizations, which supports children in developing countries; he has served on the Members Assembly of Plan International. He has chaired a Working Group on children's rights in Francophone countries. He was the Founder and first Chair of the First Nations Children's Futures Fund which supports the development of play spaces, culture, language, and leadership opportunities for First Nations Children in New Brunswick, and is a past Chair of Dots NB, a non-profit organization advocating for improved mental health services for children and youth. He has been a member and past Chair of the Advisory Council of ACCESS Canada Open Minds, a research project on youth mental health based at McGill University. He has also served on the Action Committee for Children and Teens of the Canadian Pediatric Society and the Board of Directors of Partners for Youth Inc.