



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-00786**

BY: **MR. ANGUS (TIMMINS-JAMES BAY)**

DATE: **OCTOBER 20, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **HONOURABLE CAROLYN BENNETT**

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Response by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Post-secondary education**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

The Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs would like to thank the petitioners for expressing their concerns over the lack of funding in the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and accessibility to post-secondary education for all Indigenous learners.

**Post-secondary education**

The Government has made First Nation education a priority, with a focus on improving education outcomes for primary and secondary students. The Government has also committed to working with students, parents, educators, and Indigenous groups to explore how best to ensure that students wishing to pursue post-secondary studies have the resources and supports they need.

Budget 2016 made historic investments in primary and secondary education on reserve, totalling \$2.6 billion over five years, as well nearly \$1 billion in education infrastructure.

Budget 2016 also introduced a package of reforms to make post-secondary education more affordable for students from low- and middle-income families and ensure that student debt loads are manageable. Canada Student Grants saw an increase by 50 percent and the Department is working with students, parents, educators and Indigenous groups to improve access to these funds for Indigenous students.

In addition, the Government will invest \$10 million in Indspire in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 to provide scholarships and bursaries for Indigenous students. This is in addition to the ongoing funds Indspire receives from the Department each year.

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy helps Indigenous peoples in all regions of the country to develop employment skills and pursue training for lasting employment. There is scope to enhance the training provided through this program in fields that would enable First Nations peoples to directly support their community needs, including in housing construction, water treatment, child care, and local administration. Budget 2016 proposes to invest \$15 million over two years, beginning in 2016–17, to launch a pilot project to enhance training that aligns with community needs. The proposed investments in Budget 2016 are the first phase of a renewed and expanded Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. Over the next year, the Government will consult with stakeholders, including Indigenous organizations and employers, in order to work towards a renewed and expanded Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy.